

College Essay Example About Challenges

“Advanced females ages 13 to 14 please proceed to staging with your coaches at this time.” Skittering around the room, eyes wide and pleading, I frantically explained my situation to nearby coaches. The seconds ticked away in my head; every polite refusal increased my desperation.

Despair weighed me down. I sank to my knees as a stream of competitors, coaches, and officials flowed around me. My dojang had no coach, and the tournament rules prohibited me from competing without one.

Although I wanted to remain strong, doubts began to cloud my mind. I could not help wondering: what was the point of perfecting my skills if I would never even compete? The other members of my team, who had found coaches minutes earlier, attempted to comfort me, but I barely heard their words. They couldn't understand my despair at being left on the outside, and I never wanted them to understand.

Since my first lesson 12 years ago, the members of my dojang have become family. I have watched them grow up, finding my own happiness in theirs. Together, we have honed our kicks, blocks, and strikes. We have pushed one another to aim higher and become better martial artists. Although my dojang had searched for a reliable coach for years, we had not found one. When we attended competitions in the past, my teammates and I had always gotten lucky and found a sympathetic coach. Now, I knew this practice was unsustainable. It would devastate me to see the other members of my dojang in my situation, unable to compete and losing hope as a result. My dojang needed a coach, and I decided it was up to me to find one.

I first approached the adults in the dojang – both instructors and members' parents. However, these attempts only reacquainted me with polite refusals. Everyone I asked told me they couldn't devote multiple weekends per year to competitions. I soon realized that I would have become the coach myself.

At first, the inner workings of tournaments were a mystery to me. To prepare myself for success as a coach, I spent the next year as an official and took coaching classes on the side. I learned everything from motivational strategies to technical, behind-the-scenes components of Taekwondo competitions. Though I emerged with new knowledge and confidence in my capabilities, others did not share this faith.

Parents threw me disbelieving looks when they learned that their children's coach was only a child herself. My self-confidence was my armor, deflecting their surly glances. Every armor is penetrable, however, and as the relentless barrage of doubts pounded my resilience, it began to wear down. I grew unsure of my own abilities.

Despite the attack, I refused to give up. When I saw the shining eyes of the youngest students preparing for their first competition, I knew I couldn't let them down. To quit would be to set them up to be barred from competing like I was. The knowledge that I could solve my dojang's longtime problem motivated me to overcome my apprehension.

Now that my dojang flourishes at competitions, the attacks on me have weakened, but not ended. I may never win the approval of every parent; at times, I am still tormented by doubts, but I find solace in the fact that members of my dojang now only worry about competing to the best of their abilities.

Now, as I arrive at a tournament with my students, I close my eyes and remember the past. I visualize the frantic search for a coach and the chaos amongst my teammates as we competed with one another to find coaches before the staging calls for our respective divisions. I open my eyes to the exact opposite scene. Lacking a coach hurt my ability to compete, but I am proud to know that no member of my dojang will have to face that problem again.