MY ESSAY:

I forgot my shoes. My tennis shoes. The one thing I needed to work out with my team, and I forgot them! My friend gave me a sorry look and a shoulder shrug and said, “I guess I’ll see you in an hour after weights is over.”

As she walked away I stood there, in the girl’s bathroom, and looked at myself in the mirror. I had already changed into my shirt and had only gotten one leg through my shorts when I realized the most crucial part of my uniform was missing. I had no idea what I was going to do.

After-school weight training was optional, but many players on my soccer team participated to make a good impression on Coach Davidson during preseason. This was partially my motivation, but I honestly wanted to get stronger.  As a goalkeeper, I would be fighting for my position that year against another top goalkeeper. I was determined to work hard and be a ‘strong’ contender.

Standing there, half-dressed, in front of the mirror, I wondered what to do.  Suddenly, I realized I already knew. I finished changing and, in my bare socks, started my warm up routine on the cold (and probably unsanitary) bathroom floor. When I felt warm enough, I began to jog the 25 feet from one wall to another. In my head, I set a certain number of times I needed to touch each wall every minute. Whenever I thought about everyone else working hard in the weight room, I ran a little harder. After about ten minutes of what seemed like a sprint, I stopped, panting, and thought, *“What next?”*

Weights. I needed to lift weights to get stronger. I looked around the bathroom and found nothing equivalent to the bar we use for squats or bench press. Tentatively, I peeked outside the bathroom and spotted a chair. *“Perfect!”* I thought. I grabbed the chair and dragged it into the comfort of the bathroom. Hoisting the chair into the air, I emulated a squat jump with the unevenly distributed weight of the chair as my resistance. I crouched deep down and sprang into the air as many times as I could manage before my legs gave out. It was somewhere around my twentieth jump when a startled girl walked into the bathroom. Despite the ten open stalls, the girl must not have needed to go to the bathroom, or else she thought I needed them all, because she quickly left me to work out alone again.

After I had completed high jumps, planks, and pushups, my friends returned from weights. “What did you do?!” gasped a teammate the second she saw me. “You look so, so… *sweaty*.” I had really pushed myself. In the end, I was sweating even harder than everyone who actually went to weights. Every time I remembered my small failure to bring those tennis shoes, I became more driven to make up for my mistakes.

I’m not a world-class athlete. I’m not brilliant. I know that. But the results I have gotten on the soccer field and in the classroom are in spite of this because the greatest advantage I have is an absolute motivation to succeed. I failed to win a Varsity letter my sophomore year after starting freshman year when a hotshot freshman goalkeeper arrived. I failed to be placed in the gifted program in Elementary school despite my deep passion for learning. However, through my determination, I was able to win back a starting position junior year over the same goalkeeper who had beaten me out. After elementary school, my teacher recognized my academic potential and recommended me for all advanced classes, which I’ve been taking ever since. I learned that you can prove yourself even through small failures. So maybe it wasn’t such a bad thing that I forgot my shoes after all.

Words entered: 645