

Layup Gone Wrong

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This short story is about me enduring the hardships of tearing my ACL

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Lay-ups are one of the first fundamentals a player learns in basketball. When I first started playing ball, this was one of the first moves I was taught. I remember my mom working with me and teaching me how to do a lay-up the correct way until I mastered this basic fundamental technique. I thought I was a star when I drove around players and performed this new move I acquired. However, I never would have thought that a simple lay-up would change my life later on.

As the years went by, I progressed as a basketball player. I worked hard and put my heart and soul into becoming the best player I could be. I thought I was invincible. Basketball was my life and I didn't let anything change that.

The summer going into my sophomore year, my team went to basketball camp at Shelbyville, TN. I was being looked at by an AAU coach and knew I had to play well. During a game, I attempted a lay-up, which had come second nature to me. I expected to drive by my player and score a basket with ease. On my way up, my right knee gave out before I could finish my lay-up. I immediately fell to the floor in excruciating pain, waiting for someone to come to my aid. How could something I've done all my life injure me and cause so much agony?

While I laid there on the court, I knew deep down that I was hurt bad, but didn't want to face the fact. Even my coaches felt the same way because they ruled out any possibility that seemed drastic. They had me examined by a sports trainer and determined I sprained my knee and would be able to continue playing.

The next day, I was unable to play due to fluid and swelling on my knee. This was when everyone started to realize that maybe I was seriously injured. I, on the other hand, refused to believe that I had a major problem. This was the year that our team was expected to make it to the state tournament and I couldn't be hurt.

To be on the safe side, I had an MRI of my knee. When the MRI result came back, the doctors decided I had a bruised knee and would take a week to recover. After a week, my knee was still giving out and causing problems.

My parents then decided to take me to our good friend, Dr. Fee, an orthopedic surgeon. We had avoided this option until the end because my sister had previously torn both ACLs (anterior cruciate ligament), and this was the last thing my parents wanted to experience again.

The wait in the examining room was the longest I had ever experienced. This would determine my future and what trials awaited me. When Dr. Fee walked in the room, I was relieved to know the wait was over, but nervous to hear what my diagnosis would be.

By the look on Dr. Fee's face, I knew what fate awaited me. When he told me I had torn my ACL, I blocked out everything else he said. I remembered what my sister had to endure, and I was already dreading the long road to recovery.

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Even though I was highly disappointed, I knew I couldn't dwell on the fact that I had torn my ACL. If I wanted to play ball again, I would have to work hard and stop feeling sorry for myself. I could have easily given up knowing six months of rehabilitation lay in front of me, but my love for basketball and determination to prove I could get through this generated. I went to physical therapy three days a week for six weeks after having surgery on my right knee. Still intent on strengthening my knee, I went through a six-week knee program twice. I continued to work on my own, performing exercises to strengthen my knee.

Finally, after all the hard work I put forth; I was ready to play basketball again. Even though I missed half the season, I was ready to start off strong. I soon learned that I wasn't quite as ready as I thought I was and had to ease back into my routine. I felt like I was learning how to play ball all over again. The once natural lay ups are still a fear for me to this day, and the question still stands: will I end up like my sister and tear my other ACL?

In the end, my team had a successful season. My teammates were very patient and understanding with me. The team is my family and basketball is my life. I never want to experience tearing my ACL again, but if I do, I will work just as hard to be where I belong doing what I love.

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