

400 IM

by Laurie White



I stand waiting behind the block, my heart pounding. I am so nervous for the race of a lifetime. The heats seem to fly by so fast. I see the swimmers struggle to get out of the water, breathing hard and exhausted. The swimmers are excited that the race is over. I will soon be the one to plunge into the water and take this journey on as well. I hear the announcer call, "Heat six," and it is my turn and I am scared out of my mind. I shiver, holding on to the block of lane four with many thoughts racing through my mind.

The official blows the first whistle, which means to prepare and, not long after, the second whistle blows. I slowly climb to the top of the block. I am trembling and scared. Soon the official says, "Take your mark..." Beep! and we are off.

The first stroke is butterfly. The lap is easy and I fly through the water. I feel fast. On every stroke I pop my head out of the water and hear screaming and cheering. Then when I re-enter the water, it is silent. I finally reach the wall and turn for the second lap. Soon, a fifty is over and for the rest of the hundred I sprint through the water thinking the race is very easy.

I turn to backstroke and I enjoy the feeling that after this one hundred I will be half way through the race. I barely notice I am swimming, and I wonder why everyone always says it is the hardest race you will ever swim. On the last fifty of backstroke, I start to feel pain in my arms. They feel like they weigh one hundred pounds each. I turn to breast stroke, my worst stroke. I am extremely tired and I have pain in my arms and legs. When I come up to take a breath I can see my coaches waving their heat sheets and yelling. I start to pick up the pace.

Weakly I make my last lap of breast stroke and turn to freestyle. Suddenly, I get an extra boost of energy and sprint through my last seventy five. As I turn to the last lap, I see the last wall. It looks so peaceful and calm.

Boom! I touch the wall and hear people cheering. I glance at the clock to see a very surprising time. I didn't think I had gone that fast. I have won my heat and think to myself, This is a really fun race. I can't wait to swim it again. I hop out of the water and try to take a deep breath. That race made me breathe very hard and I look forward to the next breathtaking race. In swimming pain is fun.

Pressure

by Alex Elias

Five seconds left on the clock. The Turtles are leading by two points. The possession arrow is pointing in their direction. For the Dragons to win, the ball has to be stolen and a three-pointer scored.

The ball is thrown in. It is thrown as a high lob. I catch it and run the length on the court. I'm not the best three-point shooter, but there is no time to pass the ball and my team is depending on me. Two seconds left. I shoot. The buzzer goes off. Suddenly, there is a silence in the air as the ball soars toward the basket. It rolls around the rim and I think to myself that it's all over and that I let down the team.

It feels as if a rock is stuck in my throat. But as I am walking to the bench, my hands covering my face, a tremendous cheer bellows from the stands. I turn back around and look at the scoreboard. The Dragons have won the game. I did it. I made it. I won the game!

