Making the Team

Tick-tock. Tick-tock.

Andreas watched the clock. It seemed to be moving very slowly. This was his last class of the day—biology. Usually, Andreas liked biology. He liked learning about all of the different plants. He liked understanding how animals survived in the wild. Usually, Andreas didn&rsquo;t want biology class to end. But today was different. Today there were tryouts for the basketball team after school.

There was only one thing that Andreas liked more than science: basketball. Andreas had been practicing for months. His parents had put a basketball hoop in the backyard. Every night after dinner, Andreas went outside and practiced his shots. He loved the feeling of the basketball in his hands and the sound the ball made when it sailed through the net. Swish! Andreas thought it was the best sound in the world.

&ldquo;Psst! Andreas!&rdquo;

Andreas&rsquo;s best friend, Tyrell, was trying to get his attention.

&ldquo;I feel like this class will never end,&rdquo; said Tyrell.

&ldquo;I know,&rdquo; said Andreas. &ldquo;I&rsquo;m so nervous.&rdquo;

&ldquo;You shouldn&rsquo;t be nervous,&rdquo; said Tyrell. &ldquo;You&rsquo;re the tallest kid in fourth grade.&rdquo;

&ldquo;Height doesn&rsquo;t matter,&rdquo; said Andreas. &ldquo;What matters is if you can play the game. You&rsquo;re a much better shooter than I am.&rdquo;

Tyrell and Andreas had been best friends since kindergarten. Tyrell loved basketball, too, but his favorite team was the New York Knicks. Andreas&rsquo;s favorite team was the Chicago Bulls. The only time Tyrell and Andreas fought was when the Knicks were playing the Bulls. Tyrell was also trying out for the basketball team that afternoon. Andreas was glad he&rsquo;d have his best friend by his side.

Suddenly the bell rang and class was over. Andreas and Tyrell walked down to the gym. When they got there, Andreas&rsquo;s heart sank. There were at least 60 boys crowded onto the bleachers.

&ldquo;Oh no,&rdquo; said Tyrell. &ldquo;I never imagined there would be so many kids trying out for the basketball team.&rdquo;

Andreas knew the basketball team only had room for 20 people. That meant two-thirds of the kids there wouldn&rsquo;t make the team. Andreas and Tyrell looked at each other. What if only one of them made the team? That would be worse than not making the team at all.

The coach blew a whistle and the tryouts began. Andreas and Tyrell were separated into different groups. First Andreas ran sprints across the gym, over and over until his legs felt weak, and he was out of breath. Then, the coaches divided them into teams to play against one another. As soon as he felt his hands on the basketball, Andreas felt better. This was why he loved the game. All the nights of practicing paid off as he took shots from the 3-point line. Swish! Swish! Not all of the shots went in, but a lot of them did.

Tyrell was waiting outside when the tryouts were over.

&ldquo;How did it go?&rdquo; Andreas asked.

&ldquo;I don&rsquo;t know...I think it went alright,&rdquo; said Tyrell. &ldquo;The coach said he&rsquo;s posting a list of who made the team tomorrow before school. So I guess we&rsquo;ll find out soon enough.&rdquo;

Andreas felt his stomach tighten. He knew he had played well, but was it good enough?

&ldquo;It&rsquo;s okay,&rdquo; said Tyrell. Tyrell had known Andreas for so long that he could see when Andreas was upset. &ldquo;I&rsquo;m sure you made it. I just don&rsquo;t know if I did.&rdquo;

&ldquo;Playing on the basketball team wouldn&rsquo;t be any fun without you,&rdquo; said Andreas.

They walked the rest of the way home in silence.

The next morning Andreas couldn&rsquo;t eat any of his breakfast. &ldquo;Can we go to school early today?&rdquo; he asked his mother. &ldquo;I can&rsquo;t wait anymore.&rdquo;

His mother nodded and reached for the car keys. Five minutes later, Andreas was standing in front of the gym. He looked at the list. Tyrell&rsquo;s name was at the very top—he had made it! Andreas&rsquo;s eyes moved down the list, slowly, reading every name. His eyes began to sting. He didn&rsquo;t see his name anywhere.

&ldquo;Andreas!&rdquo; He heard Tyrell&rsquo;s happy voice. &ldquo;We made it!&rdquo;

&ldquo;What do you mean?&rdquo; asked Andreas. &ldquo;My name&rsquo;s not on there.&rdquo;

&ldquo;Yes it is! Didn&rsquo;t you look at the second sheet?&rdquo; asked Tyrell.

Andreas looked back at the list. Tyrell was right; there was a second sheet of paper underneath. Andreas lifted up the first sheet of paper and saw his name at the very top. He turned and gave Tyrell a high-five. They were going to be on the basketball team together.

Comprehension Questions

**1.** What is the one thing that Andreas likes more than science?

1. his friend Tyrell
2. **basketball**
3. baseball
4. video games

**2.** Every night after dinner, Andreas goes outside and practices shooting baskets. What motivates this action?

1. Andreas wants to beat Tyrell at basketball.
2. Andreas wants to show off for his parents.
3. Andreas wants to avoid doing his homework.
4. **Andreas wants to make the basketball team.**

**3.** What conclusion does the text best support?

1. **It is important to both Andreas and Tyrell that they make the team together.**
2. Andreas and Tyrell secretly don&rsquo;t care whether the other one makes the team.
3. Andreas and Tyrell&rsquo;s friendship is based on competition.
4. Andreas and Tyrell will play better basketball together since they made the team together.

**4.** &ldquo;Andreas thought it was the best sound in the world.&rdquo; Why might Andreas think this is the best sound?

1. because it means he missed the net
2. because it is simply a pleasant sound
3. **because it means he scored a basket**
4. because it means the other team scored

**5.** What is this story mostly about?

1. how to play the game of basketball
2. practicing in preparation for tryouts
3. **two friends making a basketball team together**
4. the friendship between two boys