

Basket Bets

Pete played basketball a lot with his friends - it was his favorite game and preferred escape from the rest of daily life. Pete played before school, at recess, after school, and on a club team with other kids from around the city. Pete used a wheelchair to get around, and he played basketball pretty well in his wheelchair. Pete's club team was for kids who use wheelchairs, and Pete was one of the best players in the club league.

There were eight teams in the club league, each one from a different neighborhood. Pete was the captain of his team: the East Side Electric Eels. Their biggest rivals were the Oak Park Ogres, from the next neighborhood over. The Eels and the Ogres always had close games, and both teams played harder against each other than against any other team in the league. Their coaches were friends and they all went to get pizza together after every game, so all the players were friends, but they still maintained a fun rivalry between the two teams.

Pete was wheeling home after playing until dark on the neighborhood court, when he ran across Hank coming the other way. Hank was the captain of the Ogres, and sometimes he came to the East Side neighborhood to visit his father there. Pete and Hank were friends - they sometimes went to the movies together at the theater in Oak Park near Hank's house or spent the night at Pete's house after Hank went to see his father. Pete threw Hank his ball and shouted, "What's up, Hank?" as they rolled to a stop next to each other.

Hank spun the ball on his finger and said, "Hey, I just saw on TV that the new Manta-Man movie is coming out next week, the day after our game! Are you getting ready for the big game on Thursday, by the way?"

"Oh, we'll be as ready as ever," said Pete. "What about your Ogres?"

"Yeah, we've been practicing a lot," said Hank. "Coach is working us hard. Hey, you wouldn't want to place a friendly wager on the game, would you?"

"What are you thinking?" asked Pete. "Like a bet or something? On our own game? I don't think so."

Hank tossed the ball back to Pete. "Sure, but not on whether we win or lose. Just a bet between you and me, who can score the most points, and whoever loses buys the tickets to Manta-Man the next day. What do you say, Pete?"

Pete really did want to see the Manta-Man movie, and anyway Hank's grin and his charm were irresistible. Hank made everything sound fun and worthwhile. Pete reluctantly agreed, and they both bragged a little bit about who was going to win before they parted

ways with a laugh. Pete went home to his father and sister and told them about the game coming up on Thursday and the movie he wanted to see, but not about his bet with Hank.

"Oh, yeah, just in time for pricey tickets," his sister said. "They just raised the ticket price AGAIN, to eight dollars! It'll be a while before I go see a new movie."

Pete was disappointed, too, but then, remembering his bet, he began to wonder if he even had enough money to pay for the tickets if he lost. He dashed over to his room, grabbed his wallet, and counted his money - just eleven dollars! He had no way to earn more money by the next week, and with only eleven dollars he could never pay for the tickets if he lost the bet. Pete decided he just had to win. He had to score more points than Hank on Thursday, and there was no way around it!

The next day at club practice Pete worked harder than ever. He moved, he shot, he rebounded, and all with a determination to outscore Hank on Thursday.

"Wow, Pete," said Wally, Pete's best friend on the Eels, after practice, "you sure went hard today. Don't wear yourself out before the Ogres game on Thursday."

But the next day Pete worked hard again, with the same determination - moving and passing and shooting with everything he had. This time, coach Nell spoke up, "Hey, Pete, you're looking good out there, keep up the hard work, but relax a little and remember to pass the ball now and then." She was smiling as Pete looked up at her on his way to the locker room, but Pete hardly noticed.

Pete continued to practice hard every day, working harder and harder with each practice. He kept thinking of how he could score the most points to beat Hank: shoot more, get the ball more, and rebound everything within his reach. When their pre-game rest day finally came, Pete felt pleased and ready to play on Thursday - and ready to beat Hank to win the bet and earn some pride.

Finally, game day arrived. The Eels and the Ogres were anxious and eager to play their closest competition and their toughest rivals. As soon as the game began, Pete jumped into playing even harder than he had at practice. He rolled, shot, and rebounded with incredible determination - racking up a solid score from the start. Pete watched as Hank played his usual best - the clear star player for his team and also the upbeat motivator for his teammates. Hank rooted his teammates on, congratulated them when they did well, and kept a good attitude while he played hard himself.

Pete was focused, more than anything, however, on his points and on Hank's points. Pete was playing for points and doing a great job of it. By the end of the first half, Pete had racked up a lot of points for himself and his team, and his teammates were patting him on the back at halftime.

"Great job, Pete, way to play, you're really going all out!" said Wally, happy to have

Pete playing so hard on his side.

"Pete, you're showing a lot of hustle," said coach Nell, "but I want you to relax a little bit and keep your eyes open for your teammates." But by then Pete could hardly hear her. He was totally lost in scoring his own points.

As the second half progressed, Pete passed less and less, and took the ball more and more for himself. He and Hank were running a close race with their scores, and by the fourth quarter, they were tied up and either one could have won the bet. The Eels and the Ogres, too, had a close score with the Eels only ahead by one point. Finally, in the fourth quarter, Pete forgot about his team entirely: he called for the ball every time another player had it. He shot the ball every time he had it, and he went for every rebound. Pete was still playing well, but he was beginning to wear out and not scoring so many points on his own.

Hank and the Ogres continued to play well; they kept up with the Eels almost point for point. For the last few seconds of the game, Pete and Hank were tied with their points, and the teams were tied as well. Suddenly, Hank scored a two-pointer: Pete and the Eels were down by two points. Pete was ready to tie up his bet and the game, driving with the ball straight for the net. Wally called out that he was wide open, but Pete charged ahead, straight towards Hank! Pete stopped too early, thinking about scoring his two points, and took a bad shot that missed and bounced straight to Wally. Wally was still wide open, and he made another shot to tie the game at the buzzer!

Unfortunately, their league did not allow overtime, so the intense game between the Eels and the Ogres ended in a tie! Both teams were satisfied, though, and all the Eels cheered Wally for making the last shot to save the game. All the Eels except Pete, that is. Pete wheeled over to one side of the court and held his head in his hands while all the others cheered and celebrated.

During the celebrations, the coaches were talking excitedly and, with big smiles, parted to go back to their teams. Coach Nell called all the Eels in for a huddle and made an announcement.

"Coach Fred and I, we've seen you practice hard all week, and we watched how hard you all played today. You've done a great job, and you deserve a big reward! Tomorrow, Coach Fred and I are taking you and the Ogres out to see the opening day of Manta-Man!"

Everyone cheered and laughed and rolled over to shake hands with the other team. They all talked about what fun the game was and about the Manta-Man movie. Hank found Pete and patted him on the back, "I guess you're off the hook this time, Pete! Of course, I still won, but we'll have to make another bet next time!"

Pete breathed a huge sigh of relief: relief that the game was over, that the bet was

over, and that they could just move on. Pete never wanted to play for himself ever again. It was so exhausting! "Next time, how about we just bet that we both play hard and see who wins in the end," said Pete, and he and Hank shared one more laugh before hitting the showers with their teammates.

1. What made Pete's team different than typical basketball teams?

- A. They were all extremely good players.
- B. They were all in wheelchairs.
- C. They only played in the neighborhood.

2. Why did Pete seem disappointed at the end of the game, even though his team was happy with the tied score?

- A. He felt bad about not passing the ball to Wally at the end of the game.
- B. He had lost the bet with Hank and didn't know how he would cover the bet.
- C. He was hurt the team cheered for Wally instead of him at the end of the game.

3. What was Pete's biggest mistake in the game?

- A. He stopped playing for the team and just played for himself.
- B. He took a bad shot at the end instead of passing the ball.
- C. He didn't make the final shot at the buzzer, so they didn't win.

4. What happened right after Wally called out that he was open to take a pass during the game?

- A. Hank scored a 2-point basket.
- B. Pete charged towards Hank.
- C. Pete took a bad shot and missed.

5. What bet did Pete make with Hank?

- A. Whichever one of them made the most rebounds would get a free ticket to Manta-Man.
- B. Whichever team scored the most points would get a free ticket to Manta- Man.
- C. Whichever one of them scored the most points would get a free ticket to Manta-Man.

6. What is probably the reason Pete hesitated to take the bet with Hank?

- A. He didn't think he was a good enough player to win the bet.
- B. He wasn't comfortable placing a personal bet on himself.
- C. He was afraid his parents would find out and he'd be in trouble.

7. What is probably the reason Hank said he wanted to make another bet with Pete for the next game?

- A. He wanted to prove that he could win again against Pete in another game.
- B. He didn't get to collect his prize and wanted another chance to bet again.
- C. He didn't fully realize how difficult the bet had made the game for Pete.

8. Why didn't Pete win the bet even though he made a lot of baskets?

- A. He played so hard in the beginning that he wore himself out.
- B. Hank was more aggressive than Pete so he played harder.
- C. Pete's teammates got in the way so he couldn't score as well.

9. Why did Pete finally decide to take the bet?

- A. Hank was very convincing, and Pete wanted to see Manta-Man anyway.
- B. Pete was excited to have a challenge and liked the chance of winning.
- C. Pete thought he would enjoy Manta-Man more if he won the ticket to see it.

10. What was this story mostly about?

- A. A good attitude is more important than good skill in basketball.
- B. It doesn't matter who wins or loses as long as they play fairly.
- C. Putting the individual ahead of the team can make everyone lose.

11. Why did Pete get nervous after making the bet with Hank?

- A. He realized he didn't have enough money to cover the bet.
- B. He was afraid his parents would find out about the bet.
- C. He didn't want the bet to lead to a fight with Hank later on.

- 12. What type of relationship did the Eels and Ogres have with each other?**
- A. Their coaches were friends, and the captains were old rivals.
 - B. They played harder against each other than against other teams.
 - C. They were good friends but also each other's biggest rival.
- 13. What best describes Hank's attitude about the bet and how he played the game?**
- A. Motivated.
 - B. Easy-going.
 - C. Confident.
- 14. What decision did Pete make after the game was over?**
- A. He and Hank should focus on their teams, not on themselves.
 - B. In the future, he wouldn't bet on any more basketball games.
 - C. Playing just for himself and not the team was too tiring to do again.
- 15. What best shows how Pete felt after the game about making bets?**
- A. Pete didn't cheer and celebrate with the rest of the team after the game.
 - B. Pete told Hank he didn't want to bet on the next game because he felt bad.
 - C. Pete suggested that they focus on how hard they play, not on betting to win.
- 16. If Pete had the money to pay for the Manta-Man movie, how might he have played the game he bet on?**
- A. He would have played just as hard, but passed to his teammates more.
 - B. He would have played less hard and shared the ball with his team more.
 - C. He would have played a lot more casually and not gotten very many points.
- 17. What important advice did Coach Nell repeatedly give to Pete?**
- A. Be aware of his teammates and work with them.
 - B. Relax and take his time when planning his shots.
 - C. Keep working hard and pushing himself for the team.

18. What probably would have been the best option for Pete, once he realized he didn't have enough money to cover the bet?
- A. Play the game, risk losing, knowing he didn't have enough money to pay.
 - B. Ask his parents for the money and risk getting in trouble with them.
 - C. Tell Hank he didn't have the money and risk Hank's negative reaction.
19. Why was the reward of movie tickets for the whole team so significant to the story?
- A. Because all of Pete's stress was about being able to buy the tickets.
 - B. Because Pete was really excited to see Manta-Man before the bet.
 - C. Because it showed how much the coaches appreciated the teams.
20. What was the main problem in the story?
- A. Pete needed to score more points than Hank in the basketball game.
 - B. Pete didn't have enough money to cover the bet he made with Hank.
 - C. Pete had to figure out a way to get tickets to Manta-Man without money.