

And Playing the Position of...

Written by Talia Haven

Heather tossed the ball up in the air as she waited for her father. Softball season has arrived, and she's been practicing every evening. Catching the ball in her glove, she yelled to herself.

"Heather catching the drive down center, what a game folks. She winds up, there's the pitch strike one! Look, at the look that the batter's giving Heather. Winding up for the pitch. Ohhh! Another strike, that makes two and 0...."

The sound of her father calling pulls Heather from her next strike.

"Let's get going before you're late for tryouts. Don't forget your glove and shoes."

The stands were crowded with parents watching the tryouts, as she made her way out of the dug out. Wearing protective gear and a face mask, she squatted down as the first batter came up to the plate. The first pitch came in low as the batter took a swing. "Strike one," called the umpire. Tossing the ball back to the pitcher's mound, Heather heard the shouts of encouragement from the coach. "Good work Mary, keep it in her strike zone.

The batter retook her position, as Mary got ready for the next pitch. CRACK

went the bat, tossing it aside, the batter took off for first base. Pulling off her facemask, Heather backed toward the backstop. Keeping her eye on the ball, she caught it before the runner had reached the base. "Out!" shouted the umpire as she held up the ball.

Up on the mound Heather wiped her hand against a pant leg. She had been pitching for the last three batters, and each had gotten a hit off of her. With the bases loaded, she could see the runner on third base leading off. Turning her attention toward the plate, she focused on the new batter stepping up. "Pitch in right in there," yelled the coach, "you can do it."

With the batter in position, she wound up for the pitch.

"STRIKE ONE," shouted the umpire as the catcher tossed the ball back.

She checked the runners, some were leading off but none were far enough off base to worry about stealing. She wound up for the pitch.

"BALL ONE," called the umpire.

Wiping her hand against her pant leg, Heather got ready for the next pitch.

"STRIKE TWO," called the umpire.

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The third ball went flying towards the batter.

The crack from the bat was loud as the ball went flying over her head to center field. Out of the corner of her eye she could see the third base runner starting for home. She continued to watch as the ball landed behind the fence.

Sitting down beside her father she reached for her tennis shoes. Pulling off one of her shoes she told him at she had got the position of catcher.

“Congratulations, catcher is a great position.”

“I want to be pitcher, I worked all spring and I got catcher.”

“Catcher is a great position on the team. There will always be someone up to bat, foul balls to catch, runners coming in to home plate. You got the best position on the team.”

“Do you really think that my catching was that good?”

“When you caught that pop up ball you were the only catcher who removed the face mask so you could see the ball better. That is important in catching; you’re good at keeping you eye on the ball. Coach seen that, and put you in the position that your strongest in, you would not be catcher if you were not good at it. Softball is a team sport.

Everyone plays where they are the strongest, you are strongest at catching.”

Heather tossed the ball up in the air as she waited for her father. Tonight was the first game of the season and she had been to every practice. Catching the ball in her glove, she yells to herself.

“And playing the position of catcher....”

Deep in her heart a proud voice responded.

“HEATHER!!”