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Date

### Broken Dreams

Last year during basketball season, an incident took place that drastically changed my life. That cold December night is one that I will remember for the rest of my life.

Basketball has always been an important part of my life, and after seven years of hard work and dedication, it was time to take advantage of my last year as a high school basketball player. Throughout the first five games of the season, I was living the dream. I was averaging over twenty points a game and was the leading scorer for the Danville Little Johns.

As I walked into the crowded gymnasium on December 9, 2005, I knew that the upcoming game was important, and I was going to give it my all. I went into the locker room, where I suited up and said a prayer before my coach came in to give the team an enthusiastic speech that "fired" everyone up. I could feel the adrenaline starting to rush through me as I led the team out of the locker room and onto the court. This is what I had dreamed about so many times as a child: leading my team to victory in front of my family, friends, and almost the entire town of Danville.

As game time began to draw near, I turned my attention away from all of the screaming fans and started focusing on what needed to be done. I had to be thoroughly prepared, mentally and physically.

The referees blew their whistles, and the game started. Right away my concentration and intensity levels rose, and I started off with a bang. I was locking people up on defense and

taking advantage of weak defenders on offense. Nothing could stop me. At the end of the first quarter, I had already scored nine points and was well on my way to break my single-game scoring record of twenty-six points.

The second quarter started out in the same manner as the first. I was hustling everywhere, “giving 100%,” as my coach would say. As the opposing team brought the ball down the court, trying to set up their offense, I darted through a lazy pass and stole the ball. I had been wishing for an opportunity like this for the past couple of years: a fast break that I could finish off with a dunk.

I sprinted down the court with the ball, excited that I was finally getting a chance to dunk. Only one man kept up with me as I flew down the court, and as I neared the goal, I made up my mind that I was going to dunk the ball, no matter what.

About halfway between the free-throw line and the goal, I jumped. But when I jumped, the other guy ran under me, cutting my legs out from underneath me. Suddenly everything started going in slow motion. My body was hovering parallel to the ground about four feet in the air. And as I fell to the ground, I stuck out my left arm to break my fall. When I hit the ground, my hip landed on my wrist, causing a severe fracture. I rolled on the ground in shock and excruciating pain.

As I was being helped off the floor, I knew that I was in bad shape because of all the grimacing faces that I saw in the crowd. Following the injury, while I waited for my ride to the hospital, I had to sit on the sidelines and watch my teammates play without me.

After a couple of minutes, my parents drove me to the Chambers Memorial Hospital. The doctor took x-rays that showed what I already knew: my wrist was broken, and my basketball season was finished.

Breaking my wrist was definitely a tough way to end my high school basketball career. I will never forget that night for as long as I live.