Topic: Being Overconfident

Pictures given: an exam script, a girl looking regretful, a badminton racquet

The stifling heat of the afternoon seeped into the humid school hall as my teammates completed their tenth round of exercise drills. Perspiration dripped from their foreheads. Though they were exhausted, their resolve was unwavering.

It was just a few weeks until the Badminton Junior Championships. Our school had made it to the finals, and we had a chance to be champions twice in a row. Everyone was occupied with training, except me. Why did the best player in the school need to train so hard? After all, no one in school had beaten me before. Resting on my laurels, I grew complacent and let my head swell with arrogance.

“Hey, Tom! You’ve been missing quite a few sessions lately,” Jason hollered. “We need to train in order to win the championships again. We shouldn’t count our chickens before they hatch. We also learnt a new technique yesterday. Are you joining us today?”

I shook my head and replied insolently, “You’re not the boss of me. Besides, I already know all the strategies. My skills far surpass yours.”

Jason frowned. “Don’t forget what Coach said: pride comes before a fall.” Rolling my eyes, I shot Jason a confident smirk and casually strutted off like an A-list model down the catwalk.

Days flew past and it was finally the competition day. Everyone was doing their warm-ups but I was already fantasising about holding the trophy in my hands. Suddenly, Jason’s voice snapped me out of my reverie.

“You remember, right, Tom? Technique five is—”

I waved him off. “I know. I know. I’ve seen you do it during training.”

We were up against a strong opponent, Forely Primary School, but we had beaten them last year during the finals to clinch the championship. Unsurprisingly, our opponents marched onto the court with vengeance in their eyes. I was unfazed. They had bitten the dust once and we would make them do so again.

The match started. The first few rallies fell into our hands easily, and I smirked. Then, without warning, the tide turned. Our opponents started attacking us relentlessly, leaving me struggling to keep up with their blistering pace. Every one of my muscles was begging me to stop but I forced myself to keep moving. If they scored just one more point, we would lose the competition!

Just then, Coach barked urgently, “Tom! Technique five! Use technique five!” I was about to leap into action when I realised I had forgotten what technique five was! I racked my brains, trying to recall the specifics, but to no avail.

“Tom! Technique five! Quickly!” Jason echoed in a panic. Confusion flooded my mind. My heart hammered against my ribs as the seconds slipped away. What was I supposed to do? I stood stock-still, trying to dredge up any memory of what technique five was.

Thwack!

Their captain swung his racquet mercilessly and the shuttlecock rocketed towards the far corner. I flung myself after it, arm outstretched, but the shuttlecock was beyond my reach.

Thud! The devastating sound of the shuttlecock hitting the ground announced my failure. At that exact second, I remembered what technique five was. I had been in the perfect position to execute it and it would have allowed us to score. Alas!

Suffused with shame, I could not meet Jason’s eyes. To my astonishment, he said, “We lost this time, but there’s always next year. Let’s just try harder next time.” His words were reassuring, but I could see the disappointment etched across his face.

Pride truly comes before a fall. My overconfidence resulted in my team’s loss. I was selfish. I did not deserve his kindness. If only I had not let one year of victory get to my head and rested on my laurels. If only I had practised diligently. If only...

Euan, P6