

The Most Important Game

Blai was 10 years old, and what he loved most in the world was playing basketball. Not a day went by that he didn’t pick up the ball, even if it was just for five minutes, to dribble a few times and shoot at the hoop in the schoolyard. The sound of the ball hitting the ground—tap, tap, tap—seemed to him the best sound in the world.

He played on the school team. He was fast and had good aim, but sometimes he got too excited. When he was passed the ball, he almost always tried to score himself, even if a teammate was better positioned.

One Tuesday at practice, while they were playing a scrimmage, Blai took three shots in a row… and missed them all. Marc, who was alone under the basket, raised his arms slightly, but it was too late. The coach blew his whistle and stopped the game.

“Blai,” he said calmly, “I know you want to help the team. But helping doesn’t always mean shooting.”

Blai felt his cheeks flush. He didn’t like making mistakes, especially not in front of everyone. He nodded without saying a word.

The following Saturday they had an important game. In the stands were families, friends, and teachers. Blai was nervous. When the game started, everything was going very fast. The score was very close, and every basket counted.

There was less than a minute left, and they were tied. Blai received the ball in the middle of the court. A tall defender was guarding him closely. He could attempt a difficult shot. He heard that familiar urgency, that little voice saying, “Shoot now!”

But then he looked up.

He saw Laia open near the free-throw line. She was alone.

For a second, time seemed to stop. If he missed the pass, they might lose their chance. If he shot and missed, they might lose that too.

He took a deep breath.

“Let’s go,” he murmured.

And he passed the ball.

Laia caught it decisively and shot. The ball bounced softly off the backboard… and went in.

Basket.

The crowd erupted with joy. Her teammates ran to hug her, and then surrounded Blai.

“Great pass!” Marc said, smiling.

Blai hadn’t taken the final shot, but he felt happier than ever. He had made the right decision. He had played for the team.

When the referee blew the final whistle, they all celebrated the victory together, laughing and jumping in the middle of the court.

That afternoon, as he walked home with the ball under his arm, Blai thought he had learned something important. Being a good player isn’t just about dribbling quickly or shooting from far out. It’s about looking around you, trusting others, and understanding that together you always go further.

He put the ball on the ground and bounced it one more time.

Tap.

And he smiled. Because he knew that had truly been his best game.