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The Equipment Manager Who Led the Team in Scoring **By Steven L. Anderson, Ph.D., MBA**

I was watching ESPN Classic the other night and I saw a piece on a young man who had a dream of playing for his high school basketball team. The problem was that he was not very gifted physically. He was small and uncoordinated. Even though he worked hard he could not make the team.

Undaunted by his failure, this young man decided to become the team’s equipment manager so that he could support his classmates on the basketball floor. For four years he worked unselfishly in this role. During this time he earned the love and respect, of not only his teammates, but of the entire student body. They loved his passion and enthusiasm for the game.

This young man’s dedication to his classmates in spite of his failure is inspiring enough, but this story gets better; a lot better. The coach of the team decided to reward this young man for his years of service by telling him to dress for the last game of his senior year because the coach was going to try to play him. The students at this school became so excited at the prospect that he might play that they all made life size pictures of his face to hold up during the game.

You can imagine the excitement level of this young man during this game. He sat in nervous excitement and cheered on his teammates during the game. Finally, with 4:19 left to go in the game, the coach pointed his finger at this young man. His time had finally come.

What happened next is almost too difficult to believe. All of his teammates fed him the ball for the rest of the game and he could not miss! In the final four minutes of that game he made six, three-point shots and scored a total of twenty points to lead his team in scoring. When the final buzzer sounded the entire student body emptied out of the stands and carried him off the floor. What an inspiration!

What can we, the spectators, learn from the incredible leadership of this young man?

- 1) Never underestimate your ability to inspire others, no matter how limited you are in ability.
- 2) Hard work is always rewarded. Be patient. If you deserve to win, eventually you will.
- 3) There is no limit to what you can achieve if you are not worried about who is getting the credit.
- 4) Whatever you can dream, you can accomplish; but be prepared for the answer to come in ways that you might have never imagined.