



FIRST PLACE RECIPIENT

The Winning Decision

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The sound of bouncing balls echoes throughout the venue. The squeaking of shoes on the hard wooden floor is never-ending. Players are hustling and running, pushing themselves to their limit. All of them, including myself, wanted to win. It was the summer of 2022, during a basketball tournament. It was a game that we needed to win in order to advance to the playoffs, and it would also be one that would test my ethics.

The game was at its halfway mark, and we were trailing by six points. Both teams were trading shots back and forth in a never ending cycle. My team needed to break this cycle and gain momentum. Fortunately, an opportunity presented itself when we got possession of the ball after a few good defensive stops. We ran through our play, passing the ball, setting screens, and then a shot went up from beyond the three point line. It's a miss. The ball bounced off the rim towards the right corner. At that point in time, me and another opposing player were closest to the ball. So we both ran for it. I dove on the ground first, gaining control of the ball, but I was going to slide out of bounds. Out of pure instinct, I threw the ball at the other player in an attempt to bounce it off him. It hit his leg, but the ball hit my hip right before bouncing out. Yet, the referee made the call in our favor. They were not able to clearly see what happened.

I felt some relief that the ball was still in our possession, but there was this lingering feeling in me. Shouldn't I be happy that we have another chance to turn the game around? I am a very competitive person. I want to win, but at the same time, I am a person who values honesty. Being

Catholic and having parents who emphasize honesty, it has been ingrained in my head. These two sides clashed and created conflict inside of me. However, in the end, I raised my hand. I told the referee I touched the ball last, and they overturned the call. With that, our momentum was gone, and we went on to lose the game by 11.

After the game, I expected my teammates to be furious at me, but they weren't. When I asked them why, they said it's just the way I am, and they don't blame me for it. Despite being frustrated with the loss, I do not regret my decision. Moments like these test our ethics. They define the kind of person you are. Whichever decision you make, it is a reflection of yourself, and in these tough moments, it is crucial that we stay true to ourselves and follow our ethics. I encourage other people to make the ethical decision in a similar situation because some things are simply more important than winning. I believe that the ethical decision is the winning decision.