



FIRST PLACE RECIPIENT

The Ethics of Goggles

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SUNNY HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

“BEEP!”

The whistle sounded for the heat in front of me to start. I was about to swim my last event of the finale meet, and my most important one at that; my 100 meter freestyle. I hadn't had a good race all day, and I wasn't likely to win this one either, as I had no chance of beating the one girl seated above me. I hoped to improve on my time, but knew I wasn't going to win.

Then, I heard the all-too-familiar “SNAP!” of goggles from the lane to my left; the same girl had just broken her goggles, and I knew from the panicked way she was looking around that she had no backup, and could not get any replacement before our race.

I felt sympathetic for her, but in the back of my mind I knew if she didn't get another pair, she wouldn't be able to race, and I would win. I looked over to where I had set my swim jacket when I took it off, and it was as if I had x-ray vision that could see into the pocket to where I knew I had a back up pair of goggles.

My mind raced as I battled with the decision to keep to myself and win the race, or to do the right thing and offer her the goggles. She was still looking around, rooted to the spot with the indecision over what to do, and I could feel her

panic as if it were my own. It had been less than a minute, but I felt as if hours had passed as I grappled with the decision. I wanted so badly to win, but as I saw the current race come in and flip at the wall with just one lap left, I knew I didn't want to win this way.

I rushed to give her my backups, and the relief on her face assured me that it was the right choice. The previous race finished, and we were signaled to get up on the blocks, and we dove.

The first three laps went by, and I didn't dare to look over to see where she was. However, as I went into my last turn, I glanced into her lane and was shocked; I was just barely in front of her. Seeing this, I put everything I had into my last lap. My lungs were burning, but I pushed through. I crashed into the wall and looked up. I had won.

At that moment, I was able to be proud of myself, not because I had won, but because I had done the right thing. This was an important lesson for me in ethics, showing that victories come from following your morals, not just from winning. Decisions like these are a reflection of your character and ethics, which are much more important than any race.