

Samuel's New Team

Would the other boys give him a chance?

By Christy Jepson
(Based on a true story)

It was early Saturday morning. Samuel sat at the kitchen table and stared at his bowl of cereal. He didn't really feel like eating.

"Dad?" he said quietly. "I changed my mind. I don't want to meet my basketball team today."

"I know it's hard to be the new kid, but you'll make friends," Dad said.

"No, it's not that . . . I'm just worried about what they'll think."

Dad sat next to him. "Do you mean you wonder what your team will think of a new player who only has one hand?"

Samuel was born without a left hand. His left arm stopped at the wrist.

"Yeah," said Samuel. "Since they don't know me, they might think a one-handed kid can't play basketball."

"They might think that, but you're a great player. And going to

practice will help you play even better," Dad said with a smile. "Come on. Get your jersey and your water bottle. Let's go meet your team."

Samuel sighed. "OK."

As soon as they entered the gymnasium, the coach walked over.

"Hi there! I'm Coach Monroe. You must be our new player."

"Yes, I'm Samuel."

"We're glad to have you on our team," Coach Monroe said. "Let's go meet the other boys."

Dad sat on a bench. Samuel grabbed his ball and followed the coach.

"I want to introduce Samuel, our newest player," Coach Monroe said. A few boys gave Samuel a small wave. "We're lucky to have him in time for our first



game. I think we're going to have a great team, a great game, and a great season!"

Coach Monroe blew his whistle, and the team started some practice moves. Samuel saw a few of his teammates staring as he bounced and threw the ball with just his right hand. He tried not to let that distract him.

During a water break, a boy sat next to Samuel on the bench. "Hi, I'm Jackson. What happened to your hand?"

"Nothing. It's just the way I was born," said Samuel.

"I've never seen anyone with one hand play ball before," said Jackson. "You're really good."

Samuel smiled. "Thanks."

Coach Monroe blew his whistle again. "For the last 30 minutes, we're going to play a practice game." He put the boys into two teams. Samuel was glad Jackson was on his team.

With a minute left in the game, both teams

had the same number of points. One of Samuel's teammates got the ball and looked around for someone to pass to. Samuel was nearby, ready to catch the ball. But the boy passed it to Jackson instead.

Jackson took a few steps. Then he spotted Samuel and passed the ball to him. Samuel caught the ball, turned, and threw it toward the basket.

Swish! The ball went in just as Coach Monroe blew the whistle. Samuel's team cheered.

"Great pass," Samuel said to Jackson as they walked to the benches.

"Great shot," Jackson said. "The other guys will learn that one hand is enough to play basketball."

Samuel smiled and gave Jackson a high five. He had a feeling Coach Monroe was right. It was going to be a great team, a great game, and a great season. ●

This story took place in the USA.