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College Writing

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Softball: Where Would I Be Without You?

Ten girls on a team, ten positions to protect, one goal to achieve. Softball consists of individual players who each come together to bond as one. Throughout my life, this sport has represented an area in my life where I have learned and developed my talent as a leader. It is my team, a group of tenacious girls who strive in every moment to be their best selves, that makes every game and practice an opportunity for personal growth. In order to guide my team in the direction of victory, it has been my responsibility to set an example for my teammates. While many sports are good for just athletics, softball played a key role in the growth of my leadership qualities, determination and teamwork.

Arriving at practice early, giving 110% effort during games, and cheering on my team even if we are not playing well have been the skills I embody each and every time I step on the field. Throughout the season, I work to be at the front of the line to demonstrate to the team what it is we should be working towards. Just knowing beside me are a full roster of girls who I know are ready for war whenever, drives me to be better. As I was one of the most experienced players on my high school team, the underclassmen would look up to me for advice and assistance. I chose to play softball not only because I knew I would have the opportunity to grow as an individual, but because I knew I would be developing alongside a team that would support and encourage who I am as a leader.

Softball is a sport, you can't, and will never be able to play without a team standing beside you. The dirt field is *our* battle ground. The minute we arrive no matter the weather, sun or rain, you throw your glove on and leave it all on the field. As I reflect on my experiences playing from 2006 to now, I have come to realize that when it is my turn up at bat, I feel the most loved and supported by my teammates in the dugout. Their faith in me, faith that I will go out and try my very best, motivates me each time I step into the batter's box. My heart rate flutters, and sweat beads drip down my face. "*Strike one*". My teammates remain confident and cheer me on. I tighten my grip. They chant, "Asha is a friend of mine, rip rip rip! She can rip it anytime, rip rip rip". The pitcher grips the ball in her glove and tosses a nice easy pitch I know will be mine. "*Clack!*" The bat cries as it makes contact with the ball, soaring over the left fielder. My whole team leaves the dugout to cheer me on. Whether I've hit or missed my team cheers my name with the same ferocity.

Softball has taught me many important lessons about leadership, working with a team, and being tenacious. I chose to play Softball not just because I knew I could grow as an individual, but also because I knew I would be developing alongside a team that would support and encourage me. My softball team is where I have been able to learn to be a confident woman, a strong athlete, with girls just like me. Every season I fought harder and challenged myself, as I wanted to grow as a leader and develop lifelong friendships. I wouldn't have grown to be the person I am today if I played any other sport. It has been my *team* that has shaped me to the person I am today and has made all the difference. It has been these teams that have made all the difference in allowing me to step up to the plate to take on a leadership role. For that, I will always be grateful.