

REVIEW OF PERFECT GAME
FROM JORDAN SCHUBERT
SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE

Perfect Game by Fred Bowen got me diving into the pages right from the start. I was first introduced to the main character Isaac, a thirteen-year-old boy who's a pitcher on his junior league baseball team. Isaac expects nothing but perfection out of his pitching, and when something didn't go his way, especially when it was no fault of his own, he threw a fit, even if his team won.

Isaac's coach tells him about a [Special Olympics Unified Sports] basketball team that he coaches on Sundays and that he wanted Isaac to come and help out.

On his way to his first practice, he is overwhelmed with seeing all these kids with disabilities. Isaac then encounters Maya, his coach's daughter who explains to him what a Unified Sports team is all about. In the corner of the gym, Isaac spots a kid named Kevin, [a Special Olympics Athlete] who is extremely shy and does not participate....

After spending more time with Coach Park, Maya, and the rest of the Unified Sports team on the basketball court, Isaac grew more excited about coming and participating. Still, Isaac wanted to figure out how to get Kevin involved more. Eventually, Kevin ran onto the court and took part in the scrimmage. After seeing Kevin build up courage to compete, Isaac lightened up on the diamond. He still wanted to pitch a perfect game, but wasn't as upset when things went wrong. One of the other factors that got Isaac to lighten up was seeing Kevin and his mom at one of his baseball games.

Winston Churchill once said, "A little attitude makes a big difference." That statement showed very true here as we saw the major shift in Isaac's attitude. From my personal standpoint, I can relate to both Isaac and the Special Olympics athletes in this story. [I] have competed in both Special Olympics and on a regular sports team. On the Special Olympics medal there are four words: Skill, Courage, Sharing, and Joy. They're all placed in order of importance. What I learned in both cases was that athleticism alone does not create success.

While this book is primarily intended for children, I recommend this book for everyone because there are just as many adults as there are kids who don't understand the difficulties that people with intellectual disabilities go through on a day to day basis. This book can motivate people of all ages to start and/or join a Unified Sports program at their school or in their community. The lesson that this book teaches us is that while some athletes have high expectations, it's important to step back every now

and then to see athletes just having fun and not worrying whether they win or lose, but making sure they have fun.