

A Winning Play

It was the last week of baseball camp, and Russell was anxious for the final game to start. If he hit a home run today, he would break the camp **record** of sixteen home runs! Not only that, but if Russell's team won the game, they would win the baseball championship and receive the gold trophy.

Russell's coach, Mimi Garcia, called all her players together. "OK, Wildcats," she said to Russell's team. "Show me what you've got!" The Wildcats whooped as they headed for their dugout. They were excited to win the **competition** and prove that they were the best athletes.

When the umpire yelled, "Play ball!" the opening pitch was thrown. Soon, Russell was **batting**, and he smacked the ball. He ran at a fast **pace** to first base. "Safe!" yelled the umpire. Within a few minutes, Russell had scored the first run of the game.

Back in the dugout, Russell sat near the **sideline** and watched the other team, the Pirates, playing in the outfield. He noticed one of the **participants** having a difficult time **fielding** the ball. This player was named Ben.

Russell had talked to Ben a few days earlier at lunch. "It's like I have a hole in my glove," Ben had said. "Just once, I'd like to catch the ball and get somebody out." Russell was lucky—baseball came easily to him. But as he watched Ben struggling on the field, Russell felt sorry for him.

The game continued, and the score was very close. By the last inning, the Wildcats had nine runs and the Pirates had ten. "I need that home run now more than ever," thought Russell as he got ready to bat.

When the pitch came, Russell struck the ball straight into left field—and straight toward Ben! "Please be a home run," Russell said hopefully. He ran swiftly, but was soon cut short by the umpire. "You're out!" he said. Russell looked up in disbelief to see Ben happily waving the ball in his glove.

"I got it!" Ben shouted.

Russell cracked a smile. "Guess I won't be breaking that record," he thought, "but it was worth it just to watch Ben make the catch!"

COMPREHENSION Do you think Russell would make a good role model? Why or why not? Which words about sports help you picture the story in your mind?



JACKIE CHAN, SUPERSTAR

Jackie Chan is one of the most popular stars of Asian action movies. He has become a major Hollywood star in comedies as well as action films. In addition, Chan has worked hard to help young people in need.

Jackie Chan was born in Hong Kong, China. When Chan was a young boy, he began to learn kung fu from his father. Later, he learned from a kung fu master. His master, Yu Jim Yuen, taught only the best students. He looked for students who showed **agility**, or were quick and could bend easily. He looked for students who also had **endurance**. These students were able to practice for a long time without getting tired. While studying with his master, Chan learned a very difficult set of **aerobic** exercises and martial arts skills.

When Chan was a teenager, he joined two other students who studied with Yu Jim Yuen. They formed a team and called themselves the Three Brothers. Then they began performing in action movies. Their **routines** in the movies allowed them to use the skills they had learned from their master. They got to show their **dexterity** and timing by doing amazing flips and running up walls.

Soon after, Chan began starring in movies where he could show his **flexibility**. Sometimes he would dodge things, and other times he would move very quickly. American film companies grew interested in him, but his first American films did not sell many tickets. So Chan went back to Hong Kong and began making his own movies. These movies had a mix of action and comedy. The audience's favorite part was always the **showdown**. In a showdown scene, Chan and his **opponents** showed all their martial arts skills by flipping, running, climbing, and jumping. It was amazing to watch. It wasn't long before Chan became famous in the United States and around the world.

Chan wanted to use his fame for a good cause. He decided to help kids with talent in kung fu, acting, and singing. He also wanted to pay for medicine for kids with serious illnesses. Chan founded a program that helps kids, especially kids from Hong Kong, China. The program is called the Jackie Chan Charitable Foundation.

Today, Jackie Chan continues to make movies. He has appeared in about one hundred movies and has fans all over the world.

COMPREHENSION Retell how Jackie Chan became a star. What words help you understand what skills it takes to be an actor in martial arts movies?

