

Wells Lee

Essay - (500-750 words) - Explain a situation where you had to overcome an adversity.

I grew up poor and knew it at an early age.

I slept in a rickety bed, and my family's consumption of fast food had to do with consuming the maximum calories for the minimum of money. With few clothes in my drawers, I washed them as often as I could and sometimes wore the same ones for multiple days. I also keenly remember my parents emphasizing the importance of keeping the use of our air conditioning and heating to a low to avoid high utility bills. Before long, I always found myself looking for the cheapest options available. What I had not expected, though, was the birth of a new passion in my sophomore year that would conflict with my situation: bowling.

I took up the sport recreationally with the notion that I could get on the team, but when tryouts came, I failed to make it. Perhaps it was the fact that I hated losing or simply that I enjoyed the sport, but an intense fire was lit in me. I was ready to take the game much more seriously and started a regimen to get ready for the following year's tryouts.

The next few weeks were marked by intensive research and practice. I discovered that bowling is as deep a sport as any other, with many aspects to master. A great bowler understands lane topography, ball type and strength, angles, and rolling techniques—which needs to be adjusted depending on oil patterns. I sought advice from top local league bowlers, noting when and how they made adjustments and analyzed hours of videos of professionals. I learned that bowling, at its heart, is a competition against oneself; the rewarding part is not necessarily the number of pins I hit but knowing that I made the right choices to get the result—a valuable lesson I now apply to other parts of my life. I got worse before I got better. Finding my own style was a challenge, but once I had it, my performance improved markedly. Being able to see tangible progress was extremely fulfilling.

Though I grew to love the sport, the reality was that bowling is expensive. While there may be free public hoops to shoot or tennis courts to play on, bowling alleys charge money – and not to mention the mileage used to get there. This was my greatest adversity: balancing my financial situation without sacrificing a passion.

In the midst of my dilemma, a month after the tryout, I got as lucky as if I had spared a 7-10 split. A player left the team, leaving an open spot on the bench. Having developed my skills, I won it by a sizable margin. The "What happened to you?!" expressions of my new teammates were a joy to behold. Playing in competitions with them, I absorbed much from my teammates, who all have different play styles; they have caught many of my mistakes and bad habits. Having them by my side gave me confidence in my abilities. Upon the end of the season, I was resolved to not only continue bowling but also improve.

Although it meant that I had to juggle more responsibilities, when I neared my sixteenth birthday, I sought out a job that would help with my family and bowling expenses. Possessing a strong command in mathematics, I was hired at a local Kumon tutoring center. There, I quickly unearthed a gift for imparting knowledge while keeping sessions lighthearted with quips and anecdotes. I cherished my students' energy and grand theories about the world because they told me that they were not going to let unreasonable expectations hold them back. Looking at them, I knew I couldn't let my situation hold me back from my own passions.

Fast forward to present time, I currently serve as the varsity captain on my team with consistent scores around 200. The bowling expenses no longer present an issue, and my money has been able to help my family. My greatest joy, now, is to bring newcomers of all backgrounds like I once was into the community of bowlers, through mentorship and encouragement. It's about as much fun to cheer for their strikes as it is to notch one myself.