

### **Appendix 9.3.** Sample Sports Microfictions

#### **Sample 1, by Lauren:**

Slightly sweaty and dressed in full warm-ups, I pant during calisthenics. The higher my knees go, the higher my heart rate and anticipation rises for the race. I'm never someone who gets nervous before competition. After all, it's not like I'm a newbie to running. I always say: I have nothing to fear, but myself. Repeating this mantra over and over in my mind like a Himalayan chant, the crowd's sounds soon become peaceful white noise.

The inevitable whistle from an official pierces the air and I jog to the starting line. Once again, I remind myself that I have nothing to fear, but myself. No holding myself back; no forgiving myself for failing. I'm my own worst enemy. Moments later, the gun goes off without hesitation. It only takes me seven seconds to be face down on the ground. With my nose pressed to the freshly trimmed grass, multi-colored spikes jump over my limbs. I imagine what it would be like to stay down forever, letting life pass me by as I kiss the ground on which my competitors run. But remembering my mantra, I get up, spit out some dirt and chase down the pack. I am not afraid.

#### **Sample 2, by Gina:**

1:01.91. Bright red letters flashed on the board next to my name as I craned my neck to see my time. I could feel every muscle in my face sink into disappointment with the realization that I missed the 100 backstroke state cut by 0.02 seconds. Seriously? Two hundredths of a second faster and the pressure of qualifying for the state team would have been lifted. Somehow, despite my incredible disappointment in myself, I found the will to climb out of the pool and onto the slimy pool deck. Parents and team-mates congratulated me on my way to the warm down pool, but knew that it was all just common courtesy; nothing with meaning behind it. I looked at my coach and we simply nodded at each other in silent acknowledgment of the frustration that we both felt. My fingertips sliced the water for the nth time as I began my quick warm-down before my last race. As I swam, I replayed every stroke of my race. Where could I have gone faster? What could I have done better? The only answer: I could have swam faster.

#### **Sample 3, by Erin:**

Mark looked out the window and watched his son play football with friends. He remembered a time when he and his father had played catch and wished he was out playing with his son. Back in 2008 he was a wide receiver for the Lions, it was then that Mark's life changed completely. It was the fourth quarter of the game, they were down by three with five seconds left. As the final pass soared through the air Mark realized he had a chance to win their first game. He dived for the pass, but was tackled just as his hands were wrapping around the ball. After that, everything went dark. The next thing he remembered was lying in a hospital bed surrounded by his wife and six year old as the doctor told him he was completely paralyzed. Devastated, Mark didn't think about anything. If he

couldn't play football what could he do? It had taken weeks before his family could convince him to begin rehab. Now, seven years later, Mark had regained control of his upper body, but he still longed to feel the familiar texture of the ball in his hands after a catch.

**Sample 4, by Roman:**

As the ball sailed over the right-field wall, the stadium erupted. Ecstatic, he tried to control himself as he ran around the bases. First Base. The first bottles of champagne were prepped for the players. Second. No one could believe they had won it all for the second time. Third. It was only his third home run of the season. Home plate, and the trophy was home. Fans poured into the streets. His teammates rushed the field. Back-to-back champions, yet they weren't even supposed to make the playoffs that year. He himself had only been called up in July, and now he was on top of the world. The celebrations carried on late into the night, the whole city bursting at the seams. But as the ecstasy of winning began to wear off, there was one thought that he couldn't shake. It had been nagging him since he was called up, and he knew that it had finally happened. He had reached the peak, the pinnacle of success. And now, he had nowhere to go but down.