

Mysterious Female Basketball Player Inspires Girls

Visit the gym at 4 pm on a Friday, any Friday, and here’s what you’ll see: A fierce game of basketball. It will be a pickup game, the players sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. You’ll see flashes of brown skin and white skin. Here’s what you won’t see: girls anywhere but on the sidelines. For the girls, the gym is a giant chaise lounge, a place to sit back, chat with their friends, eat chips, and drink sodas. Every game, the boys get fitter, and the girls get fatter.

You might wonder what the girls are thinking. At one recent game, several sideline sisters chatted with this undercover reporter. “I don’t know how to play . . . we never have to play in gym . . . it looks kind of fun, but I’d be embarrassed,” admitted one girl, who was at least wearing sneakers. Another girl, wearing the kind of heels that were NOT for moving around said, “it’s too sweaty and smelly . . . that’s cool in a guy but not a girl.” She popped another Sunchip in her mouth, followed by a swig of Mountain Dew. “Diabetes isn’t cool either,” some bystanders might have thought, but nobody said anything to interrupt the lazy lounging of the sideliners.

At the game, things heat up fast. A ninth grader drops in to play, and the pace picks up. Boys fly down the court like angels. Their feet barely touch the ground, though if you get close, you can hear the whack as they collide mid-air. There’s another thing that witnesses notice—the girls watch the boys, but the boys barely glance at the girls. Of course, there’s not a lot to look at—a bunch of bodies slumped along the sidelines, eating chips and swigging soda. Then another ninth grader drops in. The player is tall, maybe six feet. And fit. And fast. And female. She leaps into the game without a glance at the girls. Slam! Her elbow sends a sixth grader to the sidelines and she takes his place as guard. She wears Nike basketball shoes, and long shorts, and a loose t-shirt. Five minutes and three baskets later, her teammates are high-fiving her. After the game, she stays to coach the sixth grader for ten minutes. Then she’s gone, without a glance at the sideline sorority. It’s like she’s a female LeBron James.

That girl won’t get diabetes, or end up obese. She won’t wheeze when she climbs the stairs. What led her to the court and these other girls to the sidelines? What led her to shoot baskets and them to eat Sunchips? This reporter wants to find her, and find out.

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