

**The Dunk of a Lifetime Reading Comprehension**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

It was a frigid February evening on the bucolic and sprawling campus of Colgate University in the hills and rolling valleys of upstate New York. A crowd had gathered at the entrance of Cotterel Field House to watch their beloved Red Raiders men's basketball team take on the lowly Lafayette Leopards. In the 1994-95 season, the Red Raiders were the top team in the Patriot League, anchored by 6'10" center, mega-star, and future NBA first round draft pick Adonal Foyle. Foyle would become the only player in recent Colgate history to make the NBA. The night, however, belonged to senior shooting guard Tucker Neale, who would earn Patriot League Player-of-the-Year honors and who had recently become the university's all-time leading scorer. The university urged its entire student body to celebrate Tucker Neale Night in what was sure to be an easy victory over the Leopards, who were 2-23 on the season and 0-13 in the Patriot League. Their season included a record-breaking 62-point loss to the Connecticut Huskies. While the Red Raider players had a possible NCAA tournament birth on their minds; the Leopards were hoping the season would come to a merciful end.

Any suspense concerning the would-be victor evaporated in the first few minutes. The raucous crowd got everything it wanted and expected. Colgate crushed Lafayette 105-71 and Tucker Neale electrified the crowd with 41 points. In the final game of the worst basketball season in Lafayette's long history, in another lopsided and embarrassing mismatch, there was something that happened that actually gave reason for the reeling Leopards to celebrate and cherish.

Travis Barnes was Lafayette's 6'5" freshman guard. As the season wore on for the Leopards, Barnes received more and more playing time. A gifted athlete, he nearly won the Patriot League high jump championship in his first season in the sport, clearing 6'10." By the time Lafayette coach John Leone had motioned for Barnes to enter the game, Colgate had already jumped out to an insurmountable lead. Upon entering the game, Barnes, or more accurately, his generous heap of curly black hair, became the target of jeering fans who chanted "cut your hair," or who made scissor cutting motions with their hands in unison. As the night wore on, and when the fans became bored with their team's domination, the 18-year-old high flier endured more and more taunting from the crowd, especially when he missed a shot.

But then, down by 20 points in the first half, the Leopards forced a turnover and Barnes scooped up the loose ball near mid-court. He had a clear path to the hoop. Behind him on his left, and closing fast, was the shadow of Adonal Foyle, half-a-foot taller and sixty pounds heavier than the wiry Barnes. Dribbling with his right hand, a step or two inside the lane, Barnes pivoted hard with his left foot and flew toward the rim, now clutching the ball with both hands. The 6'10" Foyle, also jumped and soared toward the rim, preparing for a colossal block or collision that would have likely sent Barnes hard to the floor. Time stood still for a moment and instincts kicked in. What Barnes or Foyle were thinking at the moment, no one could know. What became clear, however, was that the ball came crashing through the rim with a resounding defiance. The crowd gasped. Barnes had dunked the ball over Adonal Foyle with such power that he nearly lost control of his body from the impact. It was a dunk that his boyhood hero, Michael Jordan, would have been proud of. Instead of dropping to the floor, Barnes hung on the rim to bask in his improbable highlight for a few priceless seconds, while the Colgate fans came to terms with what had occurred. The players on the Lafayette bench erupted with joy. Finally, within the mire of a miserable season, there was something to celebrate! And it was spectacular. Barnes eventually landed and taunted back at the stunned, yet awestruck crowd with his own scissor cutting motions – much to the displeasure of his coach. He pointed high up into the stands at his high-school friend from nearby Hamilton College who had come to watch him play.

All that exists of that fateful game in 1995 are old box scores in old local newspapers. Travis would end up scoring eight points. There are no videos of the great dunk, no known photographs, and no mention in the few descriptions available of Tucker Neale Day. While most of the 1,700 people packed into Cotterel Field House left with visions of Tucker Neale swishing three-pointer after three-pointer, I left with this memory of my high school friend's dunk of a lifetime.

1. **Which of the following IS NOT part of the setting of the story?**
  - a. Colgate University
  - b. Lafayette College
  - c. Cotterel Field House
  - d. Upstate New York
  
2. **Which of the following is an accurate comparison of the basketball programs of Colgate and Lafayette?**
  - a. They had a competitive rivalry
  - b. Lafayette and Colgate were both among the top teams in Patriot League during the 1994-1995 season.
  - c. Colgate was the top team in the Patriot League and Lafayette was the worst team in the Patriot League in the 1994-1995 season.
  - d. Both Lafayette and Colgate had players talented enough for the NBA.
  
3. **The game between Colgate and Lafayette as described in the passage...**
  - a. was non-competitive.
  - b. determined whether or not Lafayette would make it to the NCAA tournament.
  - c. was competitive until the end.
  - d. had several lead changes.

4. **What does “insurmountable” means as used in the following sentence?**

But by the time Lafayette coach John Leone had motioned for Barnes to enter the game, Colgate had already jumped out to an insurmountable lead.

- a. Something that is unpredictable
  - b. Something that is unfair
  - c. Something that could not be overcome
  - d. Something that may be false
  
5. **Why does the author use the word “improbable” to describes Barnes’s dunk?**
  - a. Because he dunked over a much bigger player
  - b. Because he dunked over a much bigger player who was going to the NBA
  - c. Because he was only 6’5”
  - d. Because his team was losing by 20 points

**6. Why does the author suggest that Barnes's coach was unhappy after his dunk?**

- a. Coach Leone did not approve of his players being happy
- b. Coach Leone did not approve of dunks
- c. Coach Leone did not approve of his team celebrating when they were losing by 20 points
- d. Coach Leone thought Barnes should have passed the ball

**7. Which question is NOT answered?**

- a. What was the name of Barnes's friend in the crowd?
- b. What did Barnes do after the 1994-95 basketball season?
- c. Who did Barnes idolize as a child?
- d. Who was Tucker Neale?