

Pressure

Meet Bobby Johnson, a bright young star that plays baseball at the varsity level. Bobby lives in Pittsville Pennsylvania. He is a starting pitcher and a center fielder. Bobby was so talented he was a 2-way player and the best to even pick up a baseball in Bobby's high school history. Bobby was very competitive and wasn't used to losing. Bobby ended his season 8-1 pitching record. Two days ago they just beat the Heat to go to the state finals. He was the starting pitcher for the finals game after he batted last game.

It was a close game against the Heat. Top of the 9th inning. The score was 7-6 with the last chance to face the Tigers in the finals. Coach T was the hardest coach in the league to his players. When Trevor (Coach T) was in college he was setting records. Then he got diagnosed with a heart condition. After that, Trevor had to quit baseball. Two months later Trevor attempted suicide. Luckily his neighbors called in a noise complaint and he got to the hospital in time to save him. Trevor took that as a sign to turn his life around. He became a coach and he is very happy with his wife and 2 kids. All he needs left is to win a state championship. The three batters on deck were Jack, Bobby, and Jose. The first pitch of the inning was kicking off as Jack watched the first pitch go for a ball. Jack watched another one and another one. *Jack was controlling the count and making the pitcher nervous. The next pitch came he muscled up and while he tried to swing he suddenly felt a sharp pain in his shoulder. The pitcher hit him with a 87 MPH fastball. He took his base after 2 minutes on the ground. A new pitcher came out from the bullpen and is facing Bobby. Surprisingly he pulled a sacrifice bunt but was called safe at first. It was up to Jose he was one of the guys that never got playing time. The pitch came and Jose made contact with the ball but he looked up and realized he made more than a little contact. He couldn't believe his eyes that this ball was going over the fence and that was the game. Now the finals are the Pumas versus the Tigers.*

Bobby was pitching a no hitter into the 9th inning. The score was 0-3 and before he took the mound Coach T said "only 3 more batters". He walked the first 2 batters and got a visit to the pitching mound. "Just like playing catch." Trevor said. Bobby interrupted him "no coach it's not, nowhere close all the pressure is on me" Bobby said. "I know, son but you just have to imagine that it's easy like playing catch." Bobby nodded his head. The hitter got a base hit on the first pitch and now the bases were loaded. Bobby was not concentrated but determined he got the next batter to a 3-2 count. Bobby threw a curveball. The hitter saw it clearly and hit a walk off grand slam. Bobby was devastated and threw his glove and hat to the ground and walked away. "BOBBY you need to stop this right now you're acting like a baby." Coach T told Bobby. "I have been working my whole life for this just to screw it up. I have been working towards it since I was a little boy. Do you even know what it's like to lose a chance at something you have been working so hard on for your whole life." said Bobby in a yelling voice. "Yes I have, it was hard." Coach T said in a low voice. "I was one step to being picked number one in the

MLB draft. That was before I knew that I had a heart disease." Coach T continued. "I'm so sorry I didn't know." Bobby replied. "I coach you hard so that you can do what I didn't and make it to the minors. Bobby went home and thought about what Coach T said. 10 months later.... When Bobby gets to school he was going to talk to his coach about how he's doing. "COACH YOU IN HER!" yelled Bobby. As he walks in he gets hit with a shock. Coach T passed out and he called 911. Bobby sat there for 30 minutes before help arrived. It was too late, they showed up way too late. Bobby was devastated he quit baseball. Trevor was the only thing close to his family. Bobby went to the funeral and didn't know what was next. 2 days later his teammates came to his house to convince him. "Hey guys, what are you doing here?" asked Bobby. "Why did you quit?" asked Jack.

"I can't imagine being coached by a different coach. Coach T was the only person that I felt was family. He was only 39 years old." Bobby said quietly. "Do you think that coach would want you to give up after he's gone or even give up at all. Every time you step on the field you do it for the coach ok." His teammate Eddie said. Bobby gave Eddie a hug and he was going to continue. First game he was the starting pitcher wearing number 39 and pitched a perfect game. They got through the season undefeated. Now they are in the state tournament. They blew out every team until the semi finals. Bobby wasn't going to pitch that game unless he really had to. The starting pitcher was Eddie. They were up against the other one seed, The Wolves. Eddie got 3 strikes out in the top of the first without allowing a hit. While they were switching sides, the coach wanted to say something. "Remember this pitcher can throw a slider, a four seam fastball, a cutter, and a nasty 12-6 curve." the coach said. Jose was the first to strike out next to bat was Jack. Jack got caught looking on the first pitch and watched the ball land in for a strike. The next pitch was a fastball down the middle and Jack crushed it but it was foul. The count was zero balls 2 strikes. Jack worked his way back up to a full count. The very next pitch sss jack hit the ball hard coming off the bat at 97 miles per hour. The ball went through the pitcher's legs and into the gap for a base hit. Bobby was next up to bat when he fouled the first pitch. He saw the fastball but didn't get where it was going. The velocity on the ball flew past him going 92 miles per hour. The next pitch Bobby saw a curve so he swung down but missed. Then he realized that he throws the 12-6 curve which has a harder break towards the end with more sinking action. Then Bobby's teammate Joe hit a ground ball and then got the force out at second base. The first innings were boring strikeout after strikeout. Suddenly in the bottom of the eighth inning the Wolves hit a two run homerun. Eddie got a strikeout on the next guy to end the inning. Now they need to get two runs on the board or they lose. I was the bottom of the batting order and Eddie was coming up to hit. He was a pitcher and only focused on being a pitcher so was not the best when he came up to the plate. Eddie took the first pitch and hit second base. The ball flew over the second baseman and was caught by the center fielder. Since the ball hit the ground already he was safe at first. Jose also took the first pitch for a single.

Bobby was next up to bat and he wanted this so bad. This at bat was the longest he had in his baseball career. It was a full count that went on for thirteen pitches. On the fourteenth pitch Bobby saw the curve and he remembered it was a 12-6 curveball. Bobby crushed the ball and landed in left field. By the time they picked up the ball he just touched second and was going for third. The ball was coming and he tried to slide more to the left. The third baseman caught the ball and tagged him but it was too late Bobby's hand was already on the base. With only one out Joe hit a bunt and got out but Bobby got the lead by crossing home plate. Eddie needed to ignore the pressure and get through this inning. Eddie got a strikeout on the first batter of the inning. Eddie threw a fastball and it was crushed. The ball came fast towards Jack the shortstop and he caught it. Jack took off his glove and squeezed his hand because it hurt to catch it because it was moving 90 miles per hour towards him. The next batter was the best on The Wolves. The first pitch was a curveball in the dirt. Then Eddie threw a fastball near the middle and it was blasted. It was high in the air to center field and he flipped his bat because he thought it was gone. Suddenly Bobby put one foot on the fence and jumped and. He caught the ball while he fell over the fence. Bobby hopped the fence and he was just seeing everyone running towards him. When they got to him everyone was throwing him around and jumping together. "WHAT A CATCH!" said eddie. "OH MY GOD" said pretty much everybody else. In the locker room Bobby was going to talk to his best friend Eddie. "Lets win this chip" Eddie said. Bobby started laughing. " All we can do is try," Bobby replied. Right when Bobby turned Eddie caught him. "One more thing,we are having a party at my house. Would you like to come?" asked Eddie. " I'll be there, I don't have anything else to do." Bobby replied. The next day was the last practice of the baseball season. Tomorrow they are going to Philadelphia to play in Citizens Bank Park (That's where the Philadelphia Phillies play). It was a long trip to get there but they were there last year when they lost. Bobby kept thinking what if they lose again. He was determined to win this game for Coach T. Thirty minutes before the game Bobby was warming up with Eddie. They were back playing The Tigers, the most stacked team in the state. After warming up the Star Spangled Banner was sung and after they started. Bobby got the strikeout on the first three batters. In the bottom of the 4th inning the game was tied zero to zero. The first batter hit a ground ball after a 89 mile per hour fastball. The next batter hit the ball very high in the air and it was caught by the left fielder. The next batter was able to see Bobby's curveball well and hit it into the gap. Luckily after that he tried to steal second base and got called out. Bobby was pitching well after striking out the last batter of the eighth inning. The game was still zero to zero. Bobby was up to bat. He saw the first pitch and crushed it for a homerun. He got a strikeout on the first two batters of the inning. The very next pitch it was grounded to the shortstop. Everyone in the crowd had a gasp and he threw the ball to first. The ball got there and the umpire called the batted out. They all rushed to each other and they were jumping on

Head
Down

each other. They finally did it the Pittsville Pumas were state champions. After the game he went to Coach T grave and sat there for a while. "We did it, Coach."

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