

Jeffrey Price

College Essay (Final)

Two laps as fast as I can. That's all I have to do. I get the baton from my teammate in third place. 90 meters ahead is first place, last year's 800 meter regional champion. The first 100 meters feel great. Stretching my stride as much as I can, I run past my teammates cheering me on. "Go Jeff!" I hear, followed by "You can do it!"

I have been running since my freshman year of highschool. All the mileage I have done over the summer, all the mile repeats during Cross Country season, all the bottles of water I have chugged down, all of it was to make me faster and stronger during Track season.

As I round the first turn, one distinct voice stands out from the rest. The deep, scratchy shout from my coach saying "Go get him!" I knew he was talking about first place but I didn't know how to do it. A coach from another team tells my coach that he's crazy, that first place is set and the race is for second.

Over the years, Coach has never stopped giving speeches about running for the team. The year before, there was a senior who raced the 2 mile. During the District meet, he passed out in the final stretch. He gave everything he had and more to the team. He represented Coach's many speeches and is someone I look up to because of his dedication.

I finish the first lap still in third but closing in on second. I pass him without thinking twice but first place is still 50 meters in front of me and there's only 300 meters left in the race. Once again, there's the familiar "Go get him!" from my coach. Everyone still thinks he is out of his mind as I start picking up my speed. The wind blows through my hair. The stadium lights shine off the metal bleachers. Clouds hide the stars.

When I graduate, I want to have a legacy. I want to be the “try-hard.” I want to be remembered as the guy who always worked the hardest. I may not have the fastest times or the highest grades but I will be the hardest worker. I would rather be in the back of the fast pack than leading the slow pack.

200 meters left. I start to sprint. Everything is tuned out. Just me, the track, and the regional champion 20 meters ahead. 100 meters left. I’m closing in faster now. The crowd cheers louder every step. But I can’t hear it. He realizes I’m catching up and his body shakes as he struggles to give everything he has for first. I close my eyes. I stumble. My body can’t take anything anymore. My eyes open. I’m running on his shoulder. Two steps away from victory. I fall across the line, my body drained of all energy. Now I can see stars in the sky but they won’t stay still. My team rushes onto the track, yelling and cheering as loud as they can, fully amazed by what I did.

Anywhere you look, you will see my relay team placed second by 0.01 seconds. Everyone will see and believe the other team is 0.01 seconds better and faster. But I don’t think I failed. I think I won. I made up a 90 meter gap and lost by 0.01 seconds. Coach calls this “victory in defeat.” I pick my head up and congratulate the regional champion for a great race. Even though the paper says second, my heart says first. I didn't lose. I was able to test my limits. I was able to see how far my body could go and that, to me, is true victory. I did not win the race for my team, but no one can argue that I gave up.

Jeffrey Price

College Essay (Draft)

I was tired, about to fall asleep on the table of a concession stand. The sun beaming heat from the west. Sweat sticking to my body under my thick, green hoodie and sweatpants. People running around yelling and cheering. I didn't care. I was exhausted. "Jeff!" I didn't move. "Jeff!" It was louder this time. I muttered and sat up to see who was calling me.

40 minutes later, I'm taking my sweats off. The nice cool breeze running through my body. I line up with my teammates next to the competition. I'm cowering next to last year's regional champ in the 800 meter race. My nerves shooting through the roof. "There's no way we are going to win this," I think. "Not with the younger kids on my relay."

The gun fires, smoke drifting among the stadium lights. 43 seconds later, eight men speed past me, their feet hitting the track and popping back up faster than I can blink. I have about 53 seconds before I have to do my job. My teammate sprints around the last turn for the home stretch. Meanwhile, first place just handed off the baton to the regional champ. "Maybe I can run for second" I think to myself. The agonizing face of my teammate in the last 100 meters scares me. He stumbles to hand me the baton in third place.

Two laps as fast as I can. That's all I have to do. The first 100 meters feels great. Stretching my stride as much as I can, I run past my other teammates cheering me on. "Go Jeff!" I hear, followed by "You can do it!" And then, one distinct voice stands out from the rest. The deep, scratchy shout from my coach saying "Go get him!" I knew he was talking about first place but I didn't know how to do it. A coach from another team tells my coach that he's crazy, that first place is set and the race is for second. I finish the first lap still in third but closing in on second. I pass him without thinking twice. But first place is still 50 meters in front of me and

there's only 300 meters left in the race. Once again, there's the familiar "Go get him!" from my coach. Everyone still thinks he is out of his mind but I start picking up my speed. The wind blows through my hair. The stadium lights shine off the metal bleachers. Clouds hide the stars from view.

200 meters left. I start to sprint. Everything is tuned out. Just me, the track, and the regional champion 40 meters ahead. 100 meters left. I'm closing in faster now. The crowd cheers louder every step. But I can't hear it. He realizes I'm catching up and his body shakes as he struggles to give everything he has for first. I lose my eyes. I stumble. My body can't take anything anymore. My eyes open. I'm on his shoulder. Two steps away from victory. I fall across the line, my body drained of all energy. Now I can see stars in the sky but they won't stay still. My team rushes onto the track, yelling and cheering as loud as they can. Fully amazed by what I did.

I finally stand up and look at the stadium screen. My head falls. My shoulders slouch. My legs like lead every step. I failed. 0.01 seconds. Second place.

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