

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1724 Do You Remember Your First Time?

Do you remember your first time? I can...I can remember it like it was yesterday. I was young, lean, athletic, with endurance like you wouldn't believe. I could go forever. I scored big. My jumpshot was locked in. I loved basketball. What did you think I was talking about? Shame on you. I'm Jerry Roberts, and when I mention your first time, it was the first time you were in charge of anything and anybody. That's coming next on The Extra Point.

In my school years, counting elementary, junior high and high school, I never experienced authority, I was never in charge. In all the sports I took part in I was usually one of the top players, but never a team captain.

I ran for class president in elementary school. It came down to me and a kid named Billy. In those days it was said that you should vote for your opponent, as a sign of good character and sportsmanship. Well, I did that, figuring Billy would do the same and our votes would cancel out. Then, I'd win because my friends outnumbered his by one. I would be the next president.

You can guess the rest. I voted for Billy, Billy voted for Billy, and he won by one vote. My promising political career was over at age 11.

The next time I would have a chance at the glory of authority was in college. I was taking day classes and, living on my own at 19, I had to work full-time at night. If you've ever heard me mention the name of my first boss, Big Ed, this was when I signed on with him. I also wanted to play football.

Unfortunately, the football coach told me that if I couldn't attend the practices, I couldn't be on the team. So, my promising gridiron career ended right there.

I still wanted some sports activity, so I signed up for an intramural basketball league, which met three times a week for 55 minutes. We did some exercises, played 30-minute games, and it satisfied the physical education requirement.

I was named as one of the eight team captains. I was in management. I was the boss. I had the opportunity to mold my team into a tough, fighting unit that would breed fear into the hearts of anybody who had to face us. We'd be so good, so dominant, that others would want to cut class to avoid embarrassment.

My team was comprised of six players besides me, but only two who had ever played in any kind of organized basketball. Of the remaining four, the two girls were better than the two guys. One guy had never been on a basketball court. The rule was that, just like kid sports, everybody had to play.

I wasn't prepared to manage. I had no answer for the kid who didn't understand why he had to dribble the ball. No answer for the ones who would just walk off the court when they were tired, leaving us to play the opposition four on five, or even three on five.

There was one guy who could not shoot the ball over 10 feet. I told him to never cross midcourt, just stay under the basket and I'd throw the ball to him. When I did and he was all alone, he couldn't put it in. He'd be too far under the basket, and the ball would hit the bottom of the rim and come back to him — "Doink".

It was a struggle. I tried to figure out how to coach these people who really hadn't played basketball and really didn't want to, and I was frustrated. However, we only lost twice all semester, but both times to a real snarky bunch, and the second loss was in the game to decide the championship.

My first effort at leadership didn't look bad on paper, as they say. After all, we played in the Super Bowl of the intramural league. However, to get there, to win games, we had to be competitive, and that really wasn't the idea behind the class, the league, etc.

(Con't.)

It should have been about the activity and making sure everybody had a good time. I was focused on winning, and lost sight of that.

It's an important lesson for any manager. Make sure nobody gets left behind and pushed to the side in the haste to be successful.

I think I did better in my subsequent attempts at team leadership, but I remember the days when I would do a job myself rather than delegate. I told myself that I was saving time, but it was at a cost of not building skills and building a team.

I tell the story because it's always good to look back and think of what you did, when you had no idea of what you were doing.

If we do, we can show greater patience with the new leaders around us, who are now getting their feet wet in supervisory waters.

So, do you remember your first time?

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3FM, the Ray Gibson Show, and First Hawaiian Bank, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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