

Name: _____ Class: _____

What a Pro Knows: Playing to Win

By Christine Louise Hohlbaum
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Tamika Catchings is a retired professional basketball player. She spent her entire 15-year career with the Indiana Fever, a women's American basketball team. In this informational text, Christine Louise Hohlbaum discusses Catchings's life and accomplishments. As you read, take notes on what challenges that Catchings faced growing up.

- [1] Olympic gold medalist Tamika Catchings is a star both on and off the court. The daughter of NBA player Harvey Catchings is a Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) All-Star. She is also the creator of a foundation that helps children. It may surprise some people to know Catchings was born partially deaf.¹ She says that's exactly what motivated her to become the star she is today.

Meeting the Challenge

Because she was hard of hearing, Catchings could not speak well, and she had to wear hearing aids. Her classmates teased her constantly. She would run home from school and hide in her room for hours. "I cried and prayed a lot," she admits.

Catchings spent a lot of time at school playing basketball. She was good at it and she worked hard. She worked hard on her class subjects, too. She began to dream of a career in sports.

"Being good in sports [and at school] was my challenge to those who made fun of me," she says. "People... couldn't say that I wasn't smart, and they couldn't challenge me on the court, field, or wherever. That was my challenge to them."



"Catchings wears number 24. Her dad wore 42!" by Courtesy of Frank McGrath/Pacers Sports & Entertainment is used with permission.

- [5] Catchings knew from visiting her father's practices how much hard work it took to be a pro basketball player. But she knew what she wanted and was willing to work for it. The fact that there was no professional women's basketball team at the time didn't stop her from reaching for her goal. She just thought she would have to join a men's team. Then in 1996, the WNBA was formed.

Today, Catchings plays for the Indiana Fever. She does not wear her hearing aids on the court. She does wear them when she speaks publicly and whenever else she thinks she needs them. She travels the world to play basketball and to speak out on behalf of hard-of-hearing people.

1. lacking the ability to hear, or having a difficult time hearing

Catchings's dedication² to her family is constant. "There were plenty of times that I wanted to give up, but my family was there to support me to strive for bigger and better things," she says. "Giving up was not an option."

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2. **Dedication** (*noun*): a feeling of very strong support for or loyalty to someone

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: What is the central idea of the text?
 - A. Catchings felt pressured by her father to be the best female player in basketball.
 - B. Catchings experienced unfair treatment in basketball because of her gender.
 - C. Catchings didn't think that she could play basketball with her hearing loss.
 - D. Catchings used her struggles in life to drive her to do her best in sports.

2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "Catchings was born partially deaf. She says that's exactly what motivated her to become the star she is today." (Paragraph 1)
 - B. "Because she was hard of hearing, Catchings could not speak well, and she had to wear hearing aids." (Paragraph 2)
 - C. "Catchings knew from visiting her father's practices how much hard work it took to be a pro basketball player." (Paragraph 5)
 - D. "She travels the world to play basketball and to speak out on behalf of hard-of-hearing people." (Paragraph 6)

3. Which of the following describes how the information in the text is organized?
 - A. The author compares Catchings' experiences being deaf as a child with her experiences as an adult.
 - B. The author discusses the challenges Catchings encountered, and then how she became successful as a basketball player.
 - C. The author describes Catchings' experiences in basketball before there was a women's team, and then how they changed after.
 - D. The author discusses the support that Catchings' family offered her, and then how they contributed to her success.

4. How did Catchings' peers treat her, and how did this contribute to her commitment to basketball and school?
