The Immense Blessing of Height

By Dax Martin

As far back as I can remember, I've always been significantly taller than the people my age. I used to be profoundly insecure about it. I'd slouch, take a wide stance, or do anything to get on a similar level with my peers. That all changed while I was volunteering at a summer camp, when this wise older gentleman asked how tall I was. I said 6'3", but he didn't believe me until I fixed my posture and stood up straight at my full height. After that, he shared some insightful advice and a story from his own life, building up to this: "Being tall is as close to a superpower as you can get. All you have to do is learn to utilize it, and then grow to be proud of it." Since that day, I've taken those words to heart and done my best to live by them.

In soccer, I use my God-given height to my advantage on the defensive line. On corner kicks, I'm the most threatening player to score. In transitions, I'm the number one "stopper" against the long ball. If a tough cross comes in, it's on me to jump up and clear it with my head. I've also learned to make the most of my height athletically, not just in the obvious ways, like jumping, but also in speed. I'm lucky to have a dad who didn't just run track. He was a national champion and a Stanford runner. He taught me the posture that lets me maximize my length, and it makes a substantial difference.

A surprisingly little-known part of running fast is maximizing your stride length and ground impact as you move forward. The extra length in my legs gives me a considerable edge over the competition in both. Endurance factors in too. With my ability to cover far more ground per stride than others, plus diligent effort, I've become the "fittest" player on any field I'm on. Sports are such a fundamental part of my life, and I feel so blessed to have this advantage pushing me toward my dream of going pro.

Of course, the sports world isn't the only place where being tall pays off. I'm deeply involved in leadership roles, like leading summer camps, teams, and teaching. There are countless ways to show presence as a leader. These include a commanding voice, moving while you speak, and being kind to everyone around you. But the most subconscious and immediate one is a person's appearance. This is another area where I make effective use of my height. In situations where it's crucial to make a strong impression, I double-check my posture: standing straight up with no tilt, shoulders back. Before an important speech, I might even dress in all black to amplify my height visually.

The last part of my life I want to touch on is my everyday interactions with people. I live in New Mexico, where the average height is shorter than the national average. Thanks to how I was raised, making any positive difference in someone's day means a lot to me. This is true even if it's something small like a compliment. Being tall makes me stand out considerably, even in a crowd. So when someone's eyes get drawn to me, and they see me smiling, I think it adds a bit of positivity to whatever they're doing. On top of that, when I give a compliment while walking by, I hope it's more memorable coming from me. I hope they can relive that positive feeling later.

Overall, being tall is an immense blessing in my life. Every few months, I keep discovering more ways it's remarkable. With how much it helps me achieve and how happy it makes me, I plan to keep using my height to brighten other people's lives whenever I can.