

## J-Mac's Game

It's not typical for filmmakers to ask a high school basketball player if they can make a movie about his life, but Jason McElwain isn't an ordinary **athlete**. In February 2006, Jason took his place on the court in his school's last home game of the season. Just four minutes remained in the game. What happened next made jaws drop. Jason scored six three-pointers and a two-pointer. The crowd roared, and players carried Jason off the court on their shoulders. Had Jason been a star player throughout the season? No! In fact, he had never set foot on the court as a player until this game. Jason was the *team manager*, which meant he helped the coach with many tasks but did not actually participate in the games.

Jason has **autism**, a condition that researchers are still working to understand. People with autism face a number of challenges. But Jason, who didn't speak until he was five years old, had grown to be a well-liked teen at his school long before his famous game. He loves basketball and became the team manager to be involved with the sport. After the game, "J-Mac," as he is nicknamed, became famous overnight. **Clips** of the game appeared on national television. Then Hollywood came knocking to talk about a film. Jason's coach, Jim Johnson, **commented**, "I've coached a lot of wonderful kids, but I've never experienced such a thrill."

Jason's mother, Debbie McElwain, said, "This is the first moment Jason has ever succeeded and [been] proud of himself. I look at autism as the Berlin Wall, and he cracked it."

What did Jason have to say about his "dream come true"? "I'm not really that different. I don't really care about this autistic **situation**, really. It's just the way I am. The advice I'd give to autistic people is just keep working...just keep dreaming...you'll get your chance, and you'll do it."



### MONDAY

Choose the definition that matches the bold word in the sentence.

- Temple Grandin, who has had **autism** since she was a child, has written books about her life.
  - to make something easy
  - a condition that causes problems in communicating
- My favorite TV program shows **clips** of animals doing silly things.
  - to snip or cut
  - short sections of recorded material
- My sister **commented** that she liked my new clothes.
  - remarked
  - began to do something
- We were cold and wet, and our **situation** got even worse when the wind blew our tent away.
  - disappointment
  - the combined events at a particular time
- To be a top **athlete**, you must train hard and take good care of your health.
  - a person who is good at sports
  - a person who solves math problems

## TUESDAY

Why did the players lift Jason to their shoulders and carry him off the court? Provide details from the passage to support your answer.

## WEDNESDAY

Choose the correct answer.

- How many points did Jason score for his team?  
Ⓐ 6  
Ⓑ 4  
Ⓒ 20  
Ⓓ 40
- Why did Jason become the basketball team manager?  
Ⓐ to play basketball every day  
Ⓑ to get a movie deal  
Ⓒ to earn a basketball scholarship  
Ⓓ to be involved with the sport
- Who is Jim Johnson?  
Ⓐ J-Mac's coach  
Ⓑ a Hollywood filmmaker  
Ⓒ J-Mac's father  
Ⓓ J-Mac's real name

## THURSDAY

Write T if the sentence is true. Write F if it is false.

\_\_\_\_\_ J-Mac is Jason McElwain's nickname.

\_\_\_\_\_ Researchers do not fully understand autism.

\_\_\_\_\_ Jason cracked the real Berlin Wall.

\_\_\_\_\_ Jason feels that his autism makes him very different from other people.

\_\_\_\_\_ Jason was well-liked even before his famous game.

## FRIDAY

How can Jason McElwain's accomplishments inspire others?