

Sam - from the story "Sam the Athlete" by Stuart McLean - is a perfect example of a dynamic character, who not only undergoes a change but a tremendous growth in both himself and his outlook on life. Sam, an anxious for middle school boy takes us on a journey as he reflects on his past school experiences. He makes himself out to be very uncoordinated and a little bit oblivious to some aspects of life that are typically more obvious to others. He is presented in such an innocent and naive way that we can picture a small beaten down boy filled with bursting energy. He knows that he isn't a star athlete and sometimes he makes the reader feel as though he has given up hope. Even though he is worried and filled with dread about starting at his new school, he also demonstrates a feeling of anticipation for a fresh start and a chance to play a team sport. He has spent his whole gym life struggling from sport to sport but he is persistent and wants it to work out so badly that he has not lost the hope of belonging to a team. "All Sam wanted in the world - and he wanted it as badly as he had ever wanted anything - was to be an athlete." Page 63. He courageously tries out for field hockey and after being accepted as the new goalie for the team he feels a sense of inclusion and acceptance. As the coach cheers him on he is built up so that all his insecurities melt away, and his self-confidence receives a small but apparent boost. "It was the first time anyone had welcomed Sam to a team, ever." Page 67. When Sam realizes that the team is filled with girls his optimism does not leave him, instead, he opportunistically accepts the position and the new uniform which includes a skirt. Sam, who now belongs to a team exhibits his passionate commitment and his free spirit by wearing the skirt even after being presented with the option of shorts, stating that everyone on the team wears a skirt so why should he not have to. His hard-working ethic pays off when he saves the final shot at the final game leaving the score in his team's favour, making them the championship winners. As the team congratulates him, you can feel him grow into a more reassured and confident person who is satisfied with middle school and the person he has become.