

Sam's Athletic Journey

Everyone experiences an event in their life when they begin something new. These events can make one feel anxious or nervous. In the short story *Sam the Athlete* by Stuart McLean, protagonist Sam is a dynamic character who goes from anxious to extroverted throughout the story.

Sam is a ten to twelve year old boy beginning his first year of middle school. He wishes to fit in with others and improve at sports. In the story's exposition, Sam could not sleep, for he was worried about beginning the new school year. The next morning, he and his mother Morley head to the shoe store. Sam hoped if he owned the shoes all the children his age wore, he would fit in at his new school and improve at sports. This demonstrates his enthusiasm.

When Sam arrived at his new school, he soon discovered field hockey. It seemed to be the perfect sport for him, for he enjoyed hockey but couldn't skate. After the first practice, he discovered that he was the only boy on the team, but he was not bothered by this. He enjoyed playing field hockey with his new teammates. This demonstrates that he was joyful and happy-go-lucky.

In the story's conclusion, Sam makes a save at his first field hockey game, and his whole team cheers and congratulates him. He becomes more extroverted, for he has an epiphany: "His future might be brighter than he had thought. Maybe, if he kept hanging in, the rules would change to suit him, and maybe, if he were lucky, the game would change too," (#72).