



**February 2010**

## **THE KID ZONE**

Jake is fast. He has been fast all his life. When he races kids in his neighborhood, he wins. The school just announced a spring track meet. Not only will his school participate but other middle schools will as well. No problem. Jake pictures every race in his mind. He wins each time. He daydreams about holding the trophy and the grin that will be on his face when pictures are taken. Jake even knows where the trophy will go in his room. Jake is not worried about being beat and he's not worried on race day. He *knows* he's the fastest runner in his class. He will make Howard Middle School proud!

Ralph enjoys sports but he did not make the basketball team at Cougar Middle School. Ralph's grandpa told him that when he was young, he ran track. Ralph is interested. Ralph has never raced anyone before so he doesn't know if he's a fast runner but he begins to practice at home in his neighborhood. Ralph runs every morning before school. Ralph has not missed one track practice since his coach started working with the track team. On weekends, Ralph's grandpa takes him to the track and times each run. Ralph feels good about his running time and his coach is proud but he's not sure if he can beat the other students. Ralph has heard about a kid named Jake who is supposedly really fast.

**WHO WON THE RACE?**

**JAKE OR RALPH?**

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## RALPH WAS THE WINNER!

Why did Jake not take first place? He pictured himself winning. He was a positive thinker. Jake *knew* he could win. What happened?

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Jake enjoyed running and thought of himself as a strong runner. He beat the kids in his neighborhood when they would race. So what went wrong?

Jake was too confident. Instead of practicing or timing himself, he was certain he would win. While Jake was picturing the trophy and where it would be displayed, other students like Ralph were practicing. Ralph wasn't sure he would win the race but he was pre-  
pared.

When you practice and are prepared for an event or test, you will most likely do well. You do well because you practiced or studied. Few athletes were at their best when they first began. It took determination and hard work to become the best. Straight A students often study outside the classroom.

The next time you want to do well in an event or in a subject area, apply yourself. What do you want the end result to be? Make a plan, and make it happen!