

Luận chính

Where water meets the sea

Water used to be my escape from reality. Just like how people trapped themselves in their rooms or the gym to flee from certain things, it was just me holding my breath and submerging myself into an empty yet comforting zone, where I thrived best.

For my younger self, those daily bike rides to the pool were more than just improving his skills—they were a battle to expand his lungs and fight against asthma. He fell in love with the water at an early age. Within ten minutes, he was floating; in a week, he was swimming freestyle and backstroke. People saw potential in him, telling him he could be a great athlete and they were right. By fifteen, he had become the youngest captain of his school's swim team and shattered the school's 50-meter freestyle record with a time of 24.56 seconds. His first international competition in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, was a dream come true. Over two days, he won five medals—three silver, two gold—and earned heat winner titles in two events. Success came naturally, as effortless as breathing.

Yet it was also water, keeping that young boy away from reaching the highest level of elite swimming in the Olympics, and bringing home a gold medal.

A few months after his final championship, he trained harder than ever for the city competition, but he had only improved by 2-4 seconds over five months; he couldn't break through that invisible barrier. Despite a disciplined diet, a carefully structured workout plan, and plenty of rest, he hadn't gained a single kilogram of muscle in three months, even on a 500-calorie surplus. His legs, underdeveloped compared to his powerful upper body, failed him—they lacked the stamina and proper technique needed to compete. Soon, he was overtaken by late bloomers with physical capacities far beyond his own. In desperation, he tried every way to push past his limits, but the wall before him seemed too high to overcome. That year, he made the difficult decision to walk away from the water, leaving behind the dream he had nurtured for so long.

They say that when you truly love something, it will come back to you. For him, those words rang true. Even though he had stepped away from the water, he couldn't stop being drawn to the world of sports. Throughout high school, he stayed active in many physical activities, but one moment forever changed his approach to them. He watched [name] - a teammate with great promise, who tore his meniscus—a young soccer talent whose future was suddenly shattered by his body's failure. Seeing [name]'s unfulfilled dream hit him hard, revealing a harsh truth: many others, just like them, would have to give up on becoming professional athletes due to physical limitations. Yet, instead of letting that realization dim his passion, he let it become a motivation to keep the dream alive, not for himself, but for the next generation—by offering therapy and training to young athletes, ensuring they had the chance to achieve what he couldn't.

Now, I found myself on the sidelines, watching the games I loved, standing beside young athletes who were more than ready for the match. In those quiet moments, I saw that younger version of myself—the one who dared to step away from the spotlight, choosing instead to fuel the passion of future athletes, helping their fires burn brighter than ever.

Water, once a burden that weighed me down, also became the force that healed my soul. Just like the sea sends its waters to the skies, my passion for sports returns as rain. These rains fall into 2 channels: one, the fading river of my love for swimming; the other, a deeper current—my devotion to kinesiology—carving its way back to the vast, open sea. In that return, I find hope, knowing the distant shore is still within reach.





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