

Morgan's Story- by Morgan Floyd

Archery has been a big part of my life since the 6th grade. My school system, Somerset Independent, was contacted by Jennie Richardson. Jennie is the Kentucky National Archery in the Schools coordinator... and one of the greatest people I know. After that visit, Somerset decided to begin their NASP program. My dad, who was principal of the high school at the time, volunteered to be the archery coach, along with our very good friend Joel Zimmer. Dad and Jennie were the ones who got me into it. You can say that it's their fault I like it so much... ha ha.

I shot for the NASP program at Somerset for 4 years. I went with my school to compete in the 1st ever NASP State tournament at the Kentucky Horse Park. When I saw the awards ceremony at that first competition, I immediately had the dream of standing on the podium one day. I started pushing myself to improve so I could live that dream. Archery was something I enjoyed doing and I really wanted to be good at it. Every year, I could see myself getting better. I knew it wasn't by much, but it was still better than the year before.

Then, during my 8th grade year, my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer. It changed my perspective on a lot of things. Archery took the backseat in my life for awhile. Twenty chemo treatments and hundreds of prayers later, Mom finally beat cancer. It was really a blessing from God. It made me look at my goals differently and what I really wanted to do. Out of everything I was involved in, I found that archery was one of the things that mattered most to me. I knew that it wasn't going to be easy, but I wanted to be on that podium more than ever.

During my freshman year, two very important things happened. First, for my 15th birthday I got "My Baby", my pink Genesis bow. The second was that Mr. Curtis Beverly became my archery coach. He was the one who really developed the form I have now. He told me what I was doing right and also what I needed to work on. I know I wouldn't be shooting like I am now without him. He always reminded me to keep my form, and because of that I became more consistent than I ever had been. Curtis not only helped me on form, but on the mental aspect of archery as well. There are not many people out there who are more positive and reinforcing as he is. I'm lucky to have him as my coach.

After he worked on my form, I was ready for competition my freshman year. When state rolled around, however, I put too much pressure on myself. I ended up 7th at state, which wasn't bad, but I wanted to do a lot better. I promised myself that my sophomore year I would practice until I was where I wanted to be.

A month before my sophomore year, my dad became Assistant Superintendent for the Madison County School System. That meant that my family had to move and I had to leave the school and all my friends that I had grown up with. In the midst of all this, I had to leave the archery program that I had been involved in since its beginning. Moving was the hardest thing I ever had to do. I ended up going to Madison Central High School, which has around 1,700 students where Somerset High School had around 500. However, there were some really

positive things about moving to Madison County. The volleyball program was excellent, and there were more classes to choose from. There was one thing though that was awfully hard to take. They had never heard of the NASP program. I was certain that for me, archery was over...

Around November, Dad said he had good news for me. He told me that Madison Southern was starting NASP at their school. I was so surprised I didn't know what to say. Southern's archery coach, Coach Carter, had asked my dad if I wanted to shoot with them. I took up his offer in a heartbeat. I had been shooting with Southern for almost two months when Madison Central decided to start a NASP program as well. Kim Riggs, Tracy Poff, Jerry Petry, and Daniel Rogers were going to be our coaches. It was the greatest thing I had heard all year.

Although I was on Central's team, I practiced with both teams for the remainder of the year. It was cool to see a new archery program start from the beginning. It reminded me of when Somerset started. The students from both schools worked hard, and both teams improved faster than I ever had. Southern housed the Regional NASP tournament in their gym. I ended up 1st overall.

At state, it was a different story. I did the same thing I did my freshman year. I put too much pressure on myself and didn't shoot well. I even shot the same score I had the year before and ended up 9th. Individually, I couldn't go on to nationals, but both Central and Southern qualified. Without Central's archery team qualifying, I would never have had the chance to compete further. It was such a blessing. I was so proud of both teams. I was grateful to have a second chance, and I promised myself that I would take advantage of it.

About a month before nationals, I was taking to Curtis one night. He said something that changed my view point about archery again. He said that no matter how I shot in nationals that he, my dad, my mom, my little brother Jon, and Jennie would still love me. It sounds like a common sense, but it opened my eyes. When I talked to Jennie the next day, she said the same thing. When I told my dad what they all had said, he just smiled and told me, "Archery is something you do, not who you are."

Through their words, I finally found the confidence in myself to not be wound up in winning or losing or pleasing anybody. I realized that I shot archery for myself because I loved it. At nationals, that's all I thought about. I liked being there with all my teams: Central, Southern, and Somerset. I got to see all my friends that I had known from archery since my 6th grade at the Horse Park. It was kind of like that 1st year for me all over again.

When I was shooting, I was relaxed and enjoying myself. It was on my last round when coach Riggs came up to me and told me if I shot a 48, I would be tied for 1st, with a 288. Any other year and I would have panicked, but I remembered what my coaches and dad had said. If I won, sweet! If not, everyone was okay with it and so was I. My first arrow was a 9. Then I shot an 8. I was okay with it, and the pressure was off because there was no way I could win. I relaxed and shot three 10's to end that round. As I walked to the target I noticed that my 9 was extremely

close to the ten ring. When my partner and I knelt down and looked at it, we saw it was touching the line. I had my 48!

During awards I was afraid I would have to do a shoot out to break the tie, but then Mom reminded me that the amount of 10's we both shot might break it. The announcements for shoot outs came and went and my name was never called. I had either gotten first or second. The PA announcer, my dad, declared that the scholarship shoot off between the top 8 male and female archers was starting. I was among the list. While we were waiting for the shoot off to start, we talked about our scores. I was waiting for one of them to say 288, but it never came. That's when I first realized that I had won overall! I tried to forget about it for awhile and focus on the shoot off, but it was difficult to say the least.

In the shoot off I tied with three other girls in the 1st round and then lost the tie by one point. I ended up with a \$1000 scholarship. I had finally won! All I originally wanted to do was be on the podium, maybe 3rd or 4th, but this was such a blessing!

The awards ceremony followed after the shoot off. I sat with both Southern and Central teams. The coolest thing was it was my dad who got to announce the winners. He called my name for both high school female champion and overall female champion. It was awesome! As I walked up in front of everybody there, I thought back to that first awards ceremony at the Horse Park. It was what I had wished for. I finally had done it! As I stepped onto the podium I smiled up at my dad in the announcer's booth and prayed, "Thanks for this, God! Blessed be your name!" The only thing left to do was to smile, and try not to drop the trophy on someone!