



**SASKATCHEWAN
SPORTS
HALL OF FAME**

Activity Sheet:

Never Give Up – Ted’s Immigration Story

A little bit about Ted...

Ted Jaleta was born in Ethiopia and by high school he had gained national prominence as Ethiopia’s national high school 10 000 metre champion. This resulted in his selection in the 1973 to that country’s national junior team, but Ted was unable to reach his goal of the Olympics because of the civil war struck his country. Ted was forced to escape from Ethiopia and the turmoil that threatened his freedom and life. This eventually led to his emigration to Canada in 1982.

After a period of inactivity, Jaleta returned to training and by 1986 was very involved in the long distance running scene in southern Saskatchewan. His record in distance from 5km to half marathon is amazing with over 40 victories since his return to training. Local events that Ted has been victorious in include the echo Lake Road Race that he has won nine times (including 7 in a row), the Regina Downtown Dash, the Regina Buffalothon and the Regina Sweetheart Run.

Ted has also enjoyed similar successes in both Manitoba and Alberta with eighteen top ten finishes from 1986 to 2000. Nationally he was the Canadian Masters Road Race Champion 1995, 1996 and 1997. His efforts in the Masters category saw him compete throughout the United States with over twenty-five top five finishes in a variety of competitions. These successes resulted in him being ranked seventh in the category of international Masters Road Racers in 1997.

Jaleta owns a plethora of indoor records in the Masters’ categories for distances in races of 800 metres and up. He has been honoured as Sask Sport Inc.’s Master Athlete of the Year in 1997 and received the Queen’s Jubilee Medal in 2002. Ted contributes to the growth of his sport by acting as the distance coach for the Wheat City Kinsmen Track and Field Club.

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Immigration Activity

These personal reflections from Ted Jaleta outline his experiences as a young boy growing up in Ethiopia, living in a refugee camp and arriving in Canada.

Read the reflections and then answer/discuss the following questions as a class, group or individually.

Reflection 1: Growing Up

“In my early years growing up in Ethiopia there were days we would have to run the six miles to school very fast so as not to be late, and to avoid punishment from both teachers and parents. I guess that’s when I first unknowingly began my training for long distance running. Even at my young age I was already facing many challenges. The language taught in school was not my mother tongue, but the official Ethiopian language. Many types of culture were being forced upon us at that time, causing confusion. Every morning we had to sing the Ethiopian national anthem, raise the flag and recite from the Bible before classes began. Some of us faced the difficulty that comes with languages barriers and were punished for not following the curriculum as desired. It became very frustrating for me and other at the school. There were times when I would hide in the bushes instead of going to school. One time I did this for a week without getting caught. But when my mother finally found out, my running skills came in handy to get away. I began to run and run. Eventually the teachers caught me, but it wasn’t easy for them. They had to run hard. Punishment however was severe. I was brought to task in front of my peers and superiors. The end result actually made me a better student. I overcame the language barrier and became one of the top students of the school. I thank my mother and teachers for their tough love.”

Questions:

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- What challenges did Ted have to face at school?
- What would it feel like if you went to a school and they did not speak the same language?

To escape civil war within Ethiopia, Ted has to leave his county and be put into a refugee camp. This was at a time in his life when he was just starting his running career and could possibly make it to the Olympics. Before reading about Ted's experience, answer the following questions:

- What is a refugee camp?
- What do you think the conditions are like?
- What do you think Ted was feeling when he had to go to a refugee camp?

Reflection 2: Life in a Refugee Camp

“While in the desperate situation of a refugee camp I found myself reflecting back to the glory of my successful running days in Ethiopia. This was one way to distract me from the agony of that time. I came across a running magazine that featured high achieving athletes. I would dream and visualize myself there, running, winning and being recognized on the podium. A fellow refugee saw me dreaming and affirmed that my dream may someday become a reality for me. He gave me belief that I could be a success. It gave me hope.”

Question:

- Did Ted stay positive or negative during his experience at the refugee camp?

Reflection 3: Arriving in Canada

“A low point in Ted's new life in Canada [Regina] came when he was working at the photo lab. He had gone into the large walk-in cooler to do inventory on some supplies when a co-working slammed the large steel door shut, trapping Ted inside with no

method of escape for several frightening minutes...”Upsetting. Embarrassing. Humiliating. Painful,” he says of cooler incident.”

*from Ted’s book, “Never Give Up”

Questions:

- What difficulties would immigrants have coming to a new country like Canada?
- What is culture shock?
- Are you surprised by one of his experiences in Canada?
- How would you help someone who is having a hard time fitting in?
- Would it be hard to stay positive? Note, that Ted came to Canada by himself, would that make it harder?

Reflection 4: Overcoming Culture Shock

“After the culture shock of arriving in Regina in the middle of winter and spending the first few years struggling to find my place in this new environment, I discovered that running could help me expedite my integration into Canadian society. I used running as a vehicle to enhance both my personal and professional life. It gave me a sense of structure, which allowed me to stabilize my life and give back to the society that had provided me a new home and country.”

Questions:

- What did Ted start doing to make him feel better about being in Canada?
- After reading all of the reflections, what is one thing that you found the most interesting and why?

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