

## A New Catcher in Town

Robert stretched and then scrambled out of bed. Remembering that it was the day for Little League tryouts, he dressed quickly and dashed downstairs. His mother greeted him, gave him a hug, and served him a stack of delicious buttermilk pancakes.

“Tyrell’s going to help me practice this morning,” Robert explained between bites. “Did you know he played baseball for his college team?” Before his mother could answer, he continued, “He’s going to help me learn how to catch ground balls. That’s the skill I need to improve to convince the coach that I can play catcher.”

Robert had recently moved to this new town, and he wanted more than anything to play catcher on the town’s Little League team. He had read in the newspapers that the team might make it to the Little League World Series. Tyrell, his new neighbor, had been helping him polish his skills.

An hour later, Robert was standing in his back yard feeling very frustrated because he had caught only a few of the ground balls Tyrell had thrown. His thoughts drifted back to several months earlier when a grounder had hit him in the face. He worried that he still might be a little frightened of a ball approaching him at top speed.

At about that time, Tyrell walked over and started talking quietly to Robert. He explained that a fly ball had once jammed his finger and that he had been frightened of catching balls for a while. “I don’t know if you’ve ever experienced anything like that,” he continued, “but I learned something then that may help you. When you see the ball coming at you, just move toward it a little, and you’ll find it easier to catch.”