

**PRE-LISTENING VOCABULARY**

determination  
disease  
cure  
collapse

San Francisco  
muscles  
ruin  
crawl

state  
shut down  
dehydrated  
disqualified

**DETAILED QUESTIONS**

Who is Jim Tracy?

How much did he run in the past?

What did the girls decide to do?

How many state championships has he won?

What happened to Jim?

Where did she finish in the race?

**COMPREHENSION**

Why was the last race different?

What happened to the captain?

Summarize the story in a few sentences.

## Script

---

Each life travels at its own speed and carries its own meaning. When we will reach the end, none of us knows. So we run on until our seasons come to a finish. And what matters is not only how we reach that line but why.

I knew that she needed to finish. It's within her to finish. But it's purely determination which allows you to finish.

Jim Tracy has coached runners at San Francisco University high school for the last 18 years, winning seven state championships. Tied for most in California history. He ran 10 miles a day, every day, until four years ago.

I was out running one day and my left foot started to make a slapping noise and sure enough that got worse and worse. And finally the foot refused to even lift itself at all, finally. And now I can't run at all.

Tracy has ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease, a fatal neuro-degenerative condition. 61 years old, his muscles are shutting down. There is no cure.

This progression, you know, is bound to either ruin my life, you know, by making me completely unable to do anything or just make my life hard enough to be a greater challenge.

Before the 2010 season began, against Tracy's wishes, school officials told the team about his disease.

I was the first one to start crying. My fear is I didn't know how long he can live with this disease.

When you lose something and you lose it a little bit and a little bit at a time, at some point you realize that it's not coming back. I've run a million miles, I've run a million hills, I live in San Francisco, this city of hills, but if I go down the slope all the way, I have a feeling I'm not getting back up. And I'll miss that. I'll miss the climb to the top.

That fall, Tracy's team supported him the simplest way it could. By winning. Just before the 2010 California state meet, with a record 8<sup>th</sup> championship at stake, the girls gathered around their captain. Holland brought us all together and we huddled and we made a close circle and said alright guys let's do this for Jim. Let's do it for Jim. Do this for Jim. Do it for Jim.

2

That's the reason we were there. We just knew we needed to do it for Jim as a team.

One, two three go Big red. The race would be unlike any Tracy's team had ever run. While four of University's runners were finishing strong, Holland Reynolds, the team's captain, was surprisingly still on the course with the championship on the line.

I felt good until about 2.5 mile mark and at that point I was in second place. All of a sudden, my breathing got faster and faster and I slowed down. And I didn't really realize how many people were passing me.

Finally, the athletes start coming in, okay. And I see Bridget and I don't see Holland. And instantly I knew something was really wrong. In the final half mile of the course, Reynolds became dehydrated and disoriented. Barely able to continue running.

It's agonizing watching her. But it's no sooner gets about 3 yards to the finish line and she just pitches over and falls down. I don't remember collapsing. But right after I collapsed, an official came over to me and he let me know that I wanted to finish the race I had to either get up and walk through or crawl through. But he couldn't help me right then or else I'd be disqualified.

Ten feet away from the line, Reynolds began to crawl. I do remember looking at the ground and hearing everyone around me.

Such a courageous effort trying to cross that finish.

It never occurred to me that I wouldn't finish. You need to finish, because that's the point. Reynolds was the team's fifth and last official finisher. She crossed the line in 37<sup>th</sup> place, immediately taken to an ambulance, treated for dehydration. An hour later, it was official. Her finish had clinched Tracy's 8<sup>th</sup> state title.

It made him proud to be a coach on our team and to have girls that really care about him and will go to any efforts to do well for him. That's definitely I think worth way more than a medal.

She never dropped out before. She never let the team down ever, you know. So the need to finish is great. Like me, I have a physical problem but I'm not going to let it stop me from getting somewhere. I'm not going to make it to the finish line unless we consider death the finish line, but she got there.

Maybe what matters is not how we reach the finish line and why but who crosses that line with us.