

It was the day of the South Mission Yacht Club regatta at the end of summer. The sand was hot and the water was cold. It smelled like sunscreen and barbeque. There are about 100 people there and they were all laughing, talking and cheering for the people who were sailing.

My name is Carys, I am eight years old. I have brown hair, blue eyes and lots of freckles. I have an older brother and sister. My brother sails with our neighbor and I sail with my sister on our family friend's boat.

At the end of the regatta, we play a big game of murder ball. It's like dodgeball, but harder. It's always parents against kids. Usually just dads because only some moms play. Every year the parents win because they are bigger and stronger and faster and can throw harder. I really want to win. But I'm one of the littlest on the team and it's really, really hard to catch the ball so I can throw it back.

Once the race is all over I asked Bob if we could play murder ball. The parents dragged their feet and shovels in the sand to make the sides of where we played. All the kids went to one side and the parents went to other. Lots of them said things like, "I'm going to get my kid out!" and "You better watch out!" The kids pretended like we were making a plan, but we were just cheering for our team.

The parents got the ball first in the toss and the kids screamed and ran into one group, some of them even used the other kids like shields! My sister, Arden, grabbed my shoulders and ducked down behind me. I said, "Arden get off me!" but she wouldn't so I had to grab her hand and slip away.

Every year the kids stay in one big clump and it's really easy for the parents to throw in the direction of the clump and hit someone so last year I came up with a new strategy: to see where the clump of kids were and go the other direction. And to keep moving at all times, even if I'm staying in the same place, I move my feet so I have momentum and can move really fast.

One by one, the kids got out. But a few parents got out too. There were less people in the game, but more people behind us trying to get us out. That's because in murder ball, when you get out, you go behind the other team so now you can try to get them out from both directions.

I looked around and all of the sudden, I realized I was the last one left in the game! My dad had the ball and I knew he was going to try to get me out. He threw the ball and I spun and it flew out of bounds. Everyone was yelling, "Carys! Do it! You got it! Carys!" I was laughing but my heart was pounding because there was so much pressure and there were so many people now trying to get me out.

Bob threw the ball back to the parents' side. The sand was hot on my feet and I ran in place so I could jump out of the way and to keep my feet cool. I kept my eye on the ball. A guy I didn't even know caught it and threw it at me. I tried to jump out of the way and I almost made it but it hit my feet.

I was out but I was relieved. I was tired, hot, sweaty and sandy. All of the parents and the kids ran down the beach and into the water.