End Stage 4 English student work sample – Grade C

Evonne Goolagong Cawley

Growing up in a world where her people were only starting to gain respect, Evonne Goolagong was faced with more challenges than most people are, in more ways than one. When Evonne Goolagong Cawley was a child she was part of the only Aboriginal family in her town of Barellan, and respect for her and her family did not come easily. They were excluded enough for them to have to live in a tiny tin shack. It was not an easy life.

Peaking through the fence, she stared in amazement at how they moved. They were so quick, their racquets flying, just like their bodies. They moved with such grace, it was like watching a bird fly. This game came so naturally to them; it was inspiring.

“And what might you be doing here miss?” a gruff voice asked. Oops, busted. She’d spent too much of her time watching the older kids play tennis and now she would have to pay for it.

“Would you like to have a try? I see you here every afternoon – I reckon you might enjoy playing.” Was he serious? No one ever allowed her people to do anything. It was an opportunity too good to be true, and one that she would always remember. Once she started playing she was soaring. Her reflexes were incredible and her hands so strong. She was a natural.

At the age of 12 Evonne had already out grown the competition at her local tennis courts. She needed something more challenging. Her parents had to make a very tough decision. Vic Edwards, who at the time was one of the best Australian coaches, had offered Evonne a place at his tennis school, a very prestigious offer. The only things that halted her enrolment were that the school was quite expensive and was situated in Sydney; to drive there from Barellan would take over 7 hours. The difficulties were obvious. She eventually ended up staying at Edwards’ house with his family. She had to leave her family and to some extent, her Aboriginal heritage. Her State and National titles grew quickly- she was rising through the world ranks with ease. Then the big one came, Evonne won Wimbledon.

She was nicknamed “Sunshine Super Girl” and “La Belle Evonne”.

Evonne was having fun, working hard and enjoying herself doing what she wanted to do. She was winning World titles and major competitions in Australia, Europe and America. Evonne was at the top of her game and playing over 9 months of competition a year.

Then she crashed.

The constant injuries and pressure of playing so much tennis got to her. Evonne was left stuck in the mud, her loving father had just died and she was emotionally drained. She longed to go back to her childhood days of playing games and swimming in the irrigation canals.
She was struggling to get through each day. Her coach, Vic Edwards, was frantic. What could they do? What would get Evonne back to her normal bubbly self?

The answer it seemed was Roger Crawley. She had met him at the age of 19 at the tennis competition and thought he was fabulous, but they were both denied the opportunity to be together by their coaches. They considered the relationship to be disrupting to both their careers. That all changed, because in the years that Evonne was depressed, Edwards was desperate enough to do anything to get her better that he allowed then to be together. This was the turning point for Evonne.

Roger was changing her, she was coming back. Aboriginals and white Australians were uniting together to support her, she was becoming a national hero and was changing the way that white people viewed Aboriginals just by doing something that she had a renewed love for. All because of Roger. They were married 1975 and were later joined by a stunning daughter in 1977. After winning Wimbledon, again, Evonne Goolagong Cawley, as she was now known, moved to Queensland with her family, to reconnect with her Aboriginal culture and traditions.

Now Evonne Goolagong Cawley is a widely respected community leader who gives generously to charity. She is incredible; all these achievements couldn’t have happened without a lot of effort, determination, mental strength and love for her sport. All this from a girl who grew up in a tin shack and peeked through the tennis court fence!

Grade Commentary

Ariel has demonstrated an adequate level of competence in composing an imaginative narrative with a sense of time and place on the contribution of Evonne Goolagong Cawley to Australian society. The response is fluent with a sense of audience and purpose and includes a good conclusion, but at times it reads like a report as there is a shift from first person imaginative narrative to third person recount. There is some variety in vocabulary and sentence construction, but more effective use of literary devices would improve the response, as character and tone are not as strong.

Ariel’s response demonstrates characteristics of work typically produced by a student performing at grade C standard at the end of Stage 4.