

My Daddy Made Me Do It

Mary had been preparing for this match for a long time. She was ready. Her opponent Farris Dobbs (not her real name of course) would come to the court also ready to do battle. She's highly ranked in the 12s, top ten. Mary rank is 44 in the same age division. Mary strokes looked great, her confidence was keen; she was prepared. She was ready to prevail, by using her tennis skills, not gamesmanship. As the match progressed, Mary took charge and was up 2-1 to the surprise of Farris. She immediately left the court seeking a referee. Her Daddy must have told her, "Look, take her out of the game mentally, she may cheat you, go get a ref." Farris returned and the referee stood imposing like a commander at the helm making sure the match was one of honor. Remember tennis is a Gentleman's Sport. Mary is now leading 4-1! The referee made no corrections on Mary's calls and she continued to accrue points while Farris looked at the referee and then up to the sky to her god, her father. I could only imagine what she was horrifically thinking. Elizabeth said excitedly, "Mom, David is a genius! Mary is doing everything he said and she's up 4-1! Wow!" Farris hit balls to Mary and Mary returned them like bullets! She used all her 95lbs throwing her weight into the balls; keeping Farris at bay. Farris did not have an answer. The balls were coming too hard, too furious and too deep. She looked up to the sky again. I thought good a time as any to pray. However, she was not asking God for deliverance but her daddy who was perched high on top of the second floor of this building, like her god looking discerning, growing angrier by the second of what he has witnessed. Farris had to do something! She could not lose this set! She could not lose to someone ranked considerably lower than her! The next thing we knew the score was 5-2 and Farris left the court again with the referee standing there! We're all wondering, "What the heck is going on? Why did the match stop?" I told Elizabeth, "Go see where she's going, something doesn't seem right." Elizabeth left. My only regret is that I didn't go see what was going on. Mary observed from the court Farris' father walk down from the heavens where he was observing from his godly position and headed in his daughter's direction. Mary saw them engage in conversation and continued to do so as she observed from the tennis court. This conversation went on for several minutes. Mary saw him shake his fist at Farris' face and talk to her in a threatening manner. The father by this time had given Farris something to place over her face. Mary asked the referee. "Shouldn't you go over there because she's talking to her father." The referee responded, "I'm going to go see right now." By the time Elizabeth arrived, she saw Farris come out of the bathroom and her face was clear, no remnants of blood anywhere on her shirt or skirt. Honestly, if you have a nose bleed, there should be trickles of blood on your shirt or even on the ground... or at least somewhere. Both Mary and Elizabeth have had nosebleeds and they do not stop instantly, and there is obviously blood everywhere. Elizabeth saw her father talking to her and she was sitting on a ledge, I can only assume the tennis match could wait. It's more important for her to strategize with her Daddy than to play her match. Besides, her daddy made her do it! He was holding a paper towels to her nose, but Elizabeth didn't see any blood. The blood must have been invisible. Elizabeth asked her dad, "Is she okay?" He said, "She's fine." Here's the the million dollar question. If she's fine, why wasn't she on the court finishing the set? Several minutes have now elapsed and Mary was still waiting for her. Farris was finally gracious enough to return to the court and sat on the bench with tissue over her nose. The ref saw her with her father and opted not to do anything. What about a point penalty ref? She's delaying the game ref. Do you see any blood ref? Why didn't you follow her off the court ref? The referee is NOW watching his stopwatch for a three minute medical timeout! Wow this is amazing! Elizabeth is a diabetic, been so for 11 years, never has she been allowed to

walk off the court, return eight minutes later to elevate a low blood sugar or bring down a high blood sugar. She has retired because her blood sugar was too high! This is incredible. Daddy has really schooled her well. Daddy has been strategizing. Daddy want his daughter to win at all cost, a loss is not acceptable. Gamesmanship at its despicable best! Remember that old commercial, "Where's the beef?" My question is, "Where's the blood?" "Where is playing fairly?" Did integrity die with the dinosaur? Mary saw no signs of any blood, not on her tissue she held religiously to her face, or on her clothes. It appeared she placed the tissue into her tennis bag bankrupt of any blood. There wasn't any blood on it from Mary's vantage point and she was on the court watching Farris closely. After the match, Mary said Farris told the referee she had to use the restroom, however, her nose was not bleeding at that time. At this point it's suspect if her nose was ever bleeding. This was merely a ploy to get off the court to strategize with her Daddy. They resumed play and Mary was up 5-4, 40-15, set point. Farris immediately left the court to get the ref again. This is now her third time leaving the court, basically at crucial times. Is there a book on gamesmanship or something that I don't know about? Is her father the author? Who in their right mind would teach their child these covert, horrific tactics? Are we now relegated bankrupt of teaching our children fundamental values? Cheat at all cost, lie at all cost, win at all cost. Some parents only care about the win-loss record. Playing for development has been the least priority in junior tennis. Win, win, win and in this case Farris and her father didn't care how this goal was accomplished. Wow, Daddy has really schooled Farris well; she knew every trick in the trade. My goodness, this is an eleven year old child! I totally underestimated her, or shall I say I totally underestimated her Daddy! I wonder if he ever played a sport? Probably not, would have gotten decimated by his opponent for using these kind of deceptive practices. Once she realized the ref wasn't going to come, she returned to the court and told Mary, "I don't remember the score." Mary is definitely perplexed because she was calling out the score. Farris knew the score but instantaneous went to plan B, lapse of memory. Hey this was a pro, Daddy had trained her awesomely well. We all knew she was lying. We could clearly see Farris won the first point and Mary won the last three points. The score was indeed 40-15, Mary's favor. How could Farris possibly forget the score? Farris was tenacious, flawless as she maneuvered through any impediments. Golly this is utterly amazing! By any means necessary in her head she had to win. I recalled Elizabeth commenting she saw Farris in a match last week and her father was sitting there, looking at her and pounding his fist into his hand. Elizabeth said Farris was petrified, her father finally got up, left the court with her mother literally running behind him; disgusted by his daughter's defeat. The terror in Farris' face was probably justified. She literally dived for the ball on match point. I asked Elizabeth was she cheating? Elizabeth responded, "She couldn't there were three refs watching three matches, never had the opportunity. Getting back to this story... She told the ref she didn't know the score too. He told her they needed to go back to where they agreed. Mary was steadfast on 40-15, but Farris was not budging because she knew it would be set point. However, since the ref said they had to go back to where they agreed Mary ultimately conceded. Farris told Mary the score was 30-all. Someone shouted, "The score is 40-15." several times. Farris KNEW the score. The score was 40-15. Well the score went from 40-15 to 15-all! The gamesmanship personified by Farris Dobbs was equivalent to an adult maneuvering his way out of tax evasion before an IRS agent! This is an eleven year old child! This is utterly amazing! Eleven year old kids aren't supposed to act like that. But I guess her Daddy made her do it. Elizabeth said, "Wow, the girls in the 12s are totally different from the girls in the 12s when I played. The most they would do is lob you to death, never nothing like this! That girl is cheating Mary out of the entire set! How can she think so fast to do all the stuff she's doing?" Her Daddy has certainly schooled

her on what to do. It was amazing to see her maneuvering, plotting, calculating her next move without any degree of hesitation, merely using gamesmanship to win. Heck if she's doing this at eleven, what the heck is she going to be like at fourteen?

I could see from my vantage point how this impacted Mary's game negatively and decisively. Mary loss the second set 6-0. After the match, Farris apologized to Mary for getting the score wrong after the match! Wow she actually developed a conscious AFTER she won the match! Well, I guess better late than never. Besides, her daddy made her do it! I walked over to the tournament desk and spoke to the tournament director. I asked him who leaves the game at 5-2? She wasn't supposed to leave the court. He agreed. He said, "Mrs. Profit if you had come to me when it had happened and it was 5-2 and she left the court, I would have stopped her. She was not supposed to leave the court." I asked the referee who was on the court after the match was over. "Why did she leave the court at 5-2? He said, "Her nose was bleeding." I said, "Where's the blood?" Of course he could not comment. I saw Farris come to the tournament desk, my goodness she actually looked guilty but I'm sure relieved she won the match. She actually bowed her head appearing regretful of her actions. At that moment I felt some degree of sympathy, possibly empathy for her. She felt compelled to do what she did, in her mind she had no alternative. Her daddy definitely made her do it.

What a lesson in mental toughness or shall I say gamesmanship? Experience is often the best teacher. Our glass is always half full and never half empty. You could not pay for a better lesson. It was a difficult lesson, but a lesson nonetheless. Mary asked me after the match upset with the loss, "Mommy are you mad at me?" I put my cupped my hands around her face and said, "Never, you were wonderful. You go I'll be there in a moment." In my eyes Mary was the winner, people even said so after the match. In fact I witnessed it with my own eyes. She played sensational. To say I was proud of her effort pales to the admiration I had for her at that moment. Mary is an eleven year old child. I have raised her to play fairly under ALL circumstances; she did as she had been raised to do. She played this Gentleman's Sport with honor. She handled herself with dignity and integrity. She represented herself and her family magnificently. Even though she was being cheated she chose not to step down to that disgusting level. She was professional, and played with poise. I was really proud of her out there. The value system that I instilled in her personified her actions. I read this story today entitled, "Darkness Begets Dishonesty, Study Find." I want to add something to that title. The sun shining on a beautiful clear day begets dishonesty. There was no accountability for Farris' actions on the court. There were no consequences for her actions. Her father rewarded her for her gamesmanship. Her Daddy is definitely sending the wrong message. It's just a matter of time before this behavior causes serious consequences. Parents who force their children to imlore these tactics to win are creating the next generation of pathological liars and psychopaths. Would you hire Farris to represent your company? Would you trust her to do the right thing? Do you think she demonstrated integrity? Farris will eventually have to pay the Piper one day. Maybe she can tell him, "My Daddy made me do it!"