

Get Healthy! – Day 3

‘We got us a bass, boys!’ said Jimi. ‘Come!’ commanded Barry to Hardy, ‘Let’s play!’*****The Friday of Sports Day dawned. Actually, it didn’t so much as dawn, rather it floated in through a torrent of rainfall. Whilst Thursday had been merely damp, Friday was wet. Rivers of water ran across the school playing fields, forming deep muddy lakes wherever the ground dipped. All the devices designed to channel water, the gutters, the drainpipes, the drainage channels, were blocked or overflowing. Water hazards were everywhere. The playing fields were a tropical green colour, having been soaked with rainfall for the previous two months. ‘Right! Now remember, this is a chance for you to show your parents what you can do! Don’t forget! Best behaviour!’ Hardy looked out at the sky, which looked threateningly back at him. It looked almost human, like an enormous person holding out a pudgy finger to them as if to say, you come outside and we’ll dump so much water down on you, you’ll wish you’d never lived. An enormous grey person, ready to get them. ‘My parents won’t come out in this!’ he said, turning to Freddy, who was doing his best to look on the bright side. ‘No I don’t think mine will either, but look, it’s brightening up over there!’ ‘Silence!’ screamed the teacher as a flash of lightning momentarily lit up the room. She held her clipboard high above her head, to signal to the children that it was time to process out to the field. It also served as a makeshift umbrella. ‘We can’t go out, it’s pouring!’ said Wil as the long line of sorry children snaked out into the deluge.

‘Silence!’ roared the teacher predictably. Within seconds, their clothes were soaked through. The hair of most of the girls lay soggy across their foreheads, drips off the ends adding to their discomfort. ‘This is outrageous!’ muttered Clara as they were forced to sit down on the ground. She managed to find a damp spot, but was not actually forced to sit in a puddle. ‘You’re lucky!’ said Wil, forced to sit in a puddle. ‘Now, everyone wave at your parents!’ the teacher cheered enthusiastically. The children waved over towards the bank of seating that had been positioned on the far side of the running track. Three parents waved back from under their umbrellas. The other two were huddling together for warmth, and failed to see the waving hordes of wet children. That’s right. Only five parents turned up. Hundreds of empty seats. Uneaten strawberries. Undrunk gallons of beer.*****The events started with a Reception class running race. The eight children lined up at the start, ready for their thirty metre dash. As the whistle was blown, four of them hared off down the track, two of them hared off the wrong way, and two of them burst into tears, to add to the generally watery atmosphere. The winner celebrated by tripping up as he crossed over the line and sliding a further ten metres into a particularly deep puddle. By sitting up straight, he could just keep his head above the water. More tears. Yet more water. After a number of other events, the Year five obstacle race was awaited by its participants with a mixture of dread and excitement. Freddy, Alex, Hardy and Jaz were all taking part, but after the confrontation on Monday, they knew the event could be a lot different from what they had practiced, which consisted of walking a bit holding a bean bag, jumping through a hoop, dropping the bean bag into a bucket, and then jogging, carrying the bucket, over the finish line.

Freddy looked down. No bean bag. Just a small, soggy piece of paper. Without any further warning or explanation, the race started. ‘Three? Two? One GO!’ screamed the starter. Freddy bent down and picked up the piece of paper. As he opened it, it fell limply into two pieces but he could just make out the writing on it, which said, Forward 2 paces Left three paces Then DIG! He looked across at the others in the race who were looking back at him. With a shrug of the shoulders, he stepped forward two medium-sized paces, and then left another three. There was a round patch on the ground beneath his feet, about the size of a football, where the earth had been disturbed. He dug frantically at the ground with his hands. The earth came up quite easily, sodden as it was. Huge clumps of yellow and red clay stuck to his hands. And his feet. And to his forearms. A bit spat up from the hole, and stuck to his right cheek. After digging out a small hole, he found the bean bag. Glancing over, he could see Alex with his bag already on his head, starting to move down the course. He could also hear the teacher cackling with glee. He

pulled madly at the bag, and extracted it from the sticky mass of earth in which it stood. The bag was a bit bigger than he expected and had obviously been white before it had been buried. He picked it up and started to move off. 'On your head!' cackled the teacher. Freddy placed the squelchy blob on his head. He set off down the course towards the bucket. The squelchy blob was not actually a bean bag at all. It was filled with flour. On a dry day, flour wouldn't have been so bad, so long as you didn't drop it. On a wet day, flour was bad. Mixed with water, the flour became a sticky mass, and some of it started escaping from the bag, oozing through the thin material. Freddy could feel it seeping into his hair, and as he approached the bucket, he could feel some of it, white and

glue-like, sliding down his head and over his ears. A globule paused by his ear, then dropped sullenly into the neck of his t-shirt. He winced. As he approached the bucket, he picked the bag off his head and tossed it in. SPLAT! The bucket was not empty. Inside was a gloopy mess of stuff the teacher had concocted inside the classroom. Glue, paste, lots of scraps of paper, different coloured paints. Freddy was showered with green paint, representing his team. Alex, one lane across from him, was covered in red. Freddy picked up the bucket. 'Now run, run!' yelled the teacher next to him, holding her stopwatch out as he set off on the last phase of the course. As he ran, paint, glue, paste, paper, flour, water, mud and clay, slopped over him. Over his shoes. His socks. His legs. His shorts. Green. Grey. Brown. Off-white. He crossed the finish line and set his bucket down carefully. Alex had won, although he was even more splattered than Freddy. Back down the course, Jaz was struggling, and when he finally made it over the line, he slipped with the effort, trailing his bucket behind him. As he slid to a halt, the bucket ended up emptying itself all over him in a glorious gloopy globule. He sat there trying to clean paint and flour off his glasses. Alex and Freddy just had to laugh! ***** After the events had finished, and even though the rain had not, they all agreed that they had had a fun, if different, sort of sports day. Even the teacher looked pleased. 'See you tonight!' Freddy called across as Alex was leaving. 'I'll be there', said Alex cheerily, before adding, 'I hope!'

'You can't miss this for anything!' replied Freddy, smiling soggily to himself. *****