

Dodge This!



It is rather sad when one peaks in the 5th grade. I mean, so much of life still lies ahead but the glory days remain back in grade school. You see, I was a bit of a prodigy in elementary school. I have already recounted my feats of speed in an [earlier blog](#) but apparently I was quite the agile little dickens as well. I was unbeatable in a sport I'm told is rarely played in schools these days. Of course, I'm talking about dodgeball.

Because I grew up in the 60s, we're not talking about the sanctioned sport of Dodgeball with complex rules and uniformed teams as showcased in the Vince Vaughn movie. The way we played it on the blacktop, one kid stood in the center of a circle around which the entire class was standing. And the sole object was to throw a red rubber kickball, a little larger than a basketball, at that kid until he was hit. Whoever threw the ball that hit the kid became the next one to stand in the middle as the target.

Once I made the center, it was game over. I was like ridiculously hard to hit. I may have lost the limberness I once had but back in the day I was a cross between a circus contortionist and Reed Richards of the Fantastic Four (he was the one who could stretch himself like rubber.) On more than one occasion, the recess monitor had to come to break up our game because it was time to resume class. With me in the center, the game would never end.

My superior skill at dodging a ball soon became the stuff of classroom legend. My peers, who once were my friends, became determined to bring me down. They started sneaking extra balls to the lineup thinking I could be blindsided. They changed the rules by eliminating the circle and just lining me up against the brick wall of the school building. It was like facing a firing squad of rubber balls.

I graduated from elementary school undefeated in dodgeball. I was certain my future was bright. But my career came to a sudden and unexpected end. No one ever told me they didn't play dodgeball in junior high.

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