

# CHIMP

There was a giraffe named Chimp and he was born with three legs. The fact that he had only three legs didn't bother Chimp at all and never slowed him down. He loved all sports and he especially loved races. And today was the day of the annual giraffe races – the day that Chimp looked forward to the most all year. Chimp was feeling pretty good about his chance for a medal this year. He had been practicing every day and he was ready to go. All the giraffes were lining up for the big day.



There were three races in the competition – running, jumping, and diving. The first race was a running race. The giraffes had to run to the end of a field, pick up a potato in their mouth,

and race back. The first one across the finish line would win the race. Chimp was a fast runner and he was feeling really good about his chances for a medal in this race. The announcer called all the giraffes over to line up for the race.

### *Ready, set, go!*

Chimp was off to a good start and he was in the lead as the giraffes came to the end of the field. He leaned over to pick up his potato and slid out. He was able to regain his balance but that slight slip lost him the lead as the giraffes headed back across the field. Chimp ran his fastest but Jerry crossed the finish line a second before him. The crowd cheered and Jerry got a big medal around his neck. Oh, Chimp was disappointed! But he still walked over to Jerry and congratulated him. “Good job Jerry. You ran really fast.” “Thanks Chimp” Jerry said. “I really appreciate it.”

Chimp was feeling bad about the running race but then he remembered he still had two more chances and he picked up his spirits and moved over to the next race – the jumping race. For the jumping race, the goal was to jump up high and pick a leaf off a tree. Whoever picks the highest leaf wins. Chimp was known for being a great jumper and he felt really good about his chances for a medal on this one.



The giraffes lined up and started jumping one at a time. Some giraffes jumped high, some low. Pretty soon it was Jeff's turn. Jeff was a really good jumper. He stepped up, crouched low, and leaped into the air. He flew up high and reached the

highest leaf yet! The crowd cheered! Now Chimp was worried. He didn't now if he could jump that high. It was his turn and he took a deep breath and stepped up to the tree. He bent his knees deep, closed his eyes, and pushed off as hard as he could. He leapt into the air and stretched his neck as far as he could and grabbed a leaf. He had gotten higher than Jeff! The crowd cheered and Chimp was so happy!

He could already feel that medal around his neck. There were still a few more giraffes to go but no one was coming close to Chimp's leaf. The last giraffe to go was Lisa. Oh no, Chimp had forgotten about Lisa. She was a really good jumper. Lisa came up to the tree, crouched, and jumped into the air. She flew up, stretched her neck, and plucked a leaf that was just a smidge above Chimp's. The crowd went wild, clapping for Lisa and congratulating her. Lisa got a big medal around her neck and she was very happy. Chimp on the other hand, was quite sad. He had been so sure that he was going to win! But he still managed to put on a smile and go up to Lisa and congratulate her. "Good job, Lisa. That was a great jump." "You jumped really well too Chimp" replied Lisa. "Thanks for being happy for me".

Chimp slowly walked off and sighed. But then he remembered that he still had the diving race. And he was a good diver. There was still a chance for a medal! He ran over to the pond

where everyone was gathering for the diving race. The announcer was going over the rules. Each giraffe would get one chance to dive in the pond and try to catch a fish in his mouth. The giraffe that catches the biggest fish would win. The giraffes lined up and started diving. Some giraffes caught a fish and some didn't. The fish varied from just a few inches to over a foot. The deeper the dive, the better chance there was to catch a big fish. Jessie was right before Chimp and she had a good dive and came sputtering to the surface with a huge fish. The crowd cheered and waited for the measurement. Twenty-seven inches! Wow, Jessie had done a great job. The pressure was on Chimp. He stepped up to the line, took a deep breath, and dove in smoothly. It was a good dive and Chimp was in deep. He looked around for fish. A large fish went by but Chimp wasn't sure if it was big enough to beat Jessie. He kept looking frantically. Chimp was almost out of air when he saw a large tail off to the left. He swam over, clamped on the fish, and headed for the surface as quickly as he could. He burst out into the air above the surface, gasping for breath. The crowd cheered and the judge measured Chimp's fish. Twenty-nine inches! Chimp was in the lead!

"This is it", Chimp thought to himself, "Finally I get my medal!" There was only one more giraffe to go – Henry. Henry stepped up to the line and dove in shallow. Not the best dive, thought Chimp. But Henry looked up and there was the largest fish he'd

ever seen swimming right in front of his face. Henry reached over, chomped on the fish, and swam easily up to the surface. The crowd could tell just by looking that Henry had pulled up the biggest fish. They cheered and Henry grinned as he got a big medal around his neck. Chimp was so disappointed! His last chance and it was over! But he still managed to walk over to Henry to congratulate him. "Good job Henry" Chimp said. "Thanks Chimp. I just got lucky" Henry replied. "You did a really great dive Chimp."

Chimp walked off by himself to sit on the hilltop. "Well, another year until the next annual races" he thought. He had so hoped for a medal this year. "Next year for sure!" he finally told himself. He would practice more, work harder. All of a sudden, he heard the announcer "... and we have one more medal to give out". What? Another medal? Chimp couldn't believe his ears. "And this medal is for good sportsmanship. It goes to the giraffe who has played fairly, been supportive of his opponents, and been an all around good sport. And that medal goes to ....



Chimp! Come on up here Chimp!”

Chimp couldn't believe it! He raced up and he got a big medal around his neck. He smiled and it was the best day of his life.