

Spring Olympics, Buksam Style

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After spending a year in Korea I'm no longer a stranger to the quirks, idiosyncrasies, and surprises that are thrown my way. Instead I've come to expect them and am thus, duly prepared. I guess I'm one of the *lucky ones*, in that my school provides me with the school calendar and is also pretty good at updating me on changes. Thanks to their preparedness I was *in the know* for the schools events, the first of which I was thoroughly looking forward to was 체육대회 [sports day]. This year I was doubly excited; not only was this a day free of class and time to bond with students, this year I was also asked to participate, crazy outfit and all.



Anna and I in our awesome outfits



Class 2-1: Jump rope champs!



Class 2-2 performing Gentleman

Upon arriving at school you could feel the excitement in the air, last minute preparations were being completed outside while inside students were running around getting ready and putting final touches on their outfits. I can easily say the best part of these events (sports day, school festival, field trips) is the level of participation I see, it's not just a few students that get into it, it's the *entire* school. The day started with a bit of a fashion show including, of course, choreographed dances from each class. Before long the games were underway and the spirit of competition was in the air. Every class had two staff participants and I was lucky enough to join class 2-1, so in our bright red polka dotted pants we took to the field, competing in the 800M



נותדריבאקי **madness 1**

relay, 3 legged race, **נותדריבאקי** [traditional bridge/race game], and jump rope. There were also wrestling, volleyball and soccer matches going on throughout the day but unfortunately my team didn't make it to the finals.

In the end we pulled through with a 2nd place victory, which I'd like to attribute to my stellar performance in the 3 legged race (hey, I didn't fall!) and jump rope (50 jumps = 1st place) participation. Before we were let loose for the day there was one more event, the staff/student/parent race, which I was told consisted of running and wearing swimming fins...um, excuse me, what? Seeing as the principal loves me, we were paired up for the race and I soon found myself running hand and hand with him hoping not to trip over the swimming fin attached to my left foot, oh Korean, you will never cease to amaze and entertain me. As if this day hadn't provided enough entertainment I was invited by class 2-2 to join them after school for a samgyeopsal party, despite my exhaustion I made the *smart* choice of joining them in the home ec room where the fun just kept rolling. In between being hand fed by my students and watching them force feed each other hot peppers we managed to squeeze a round of running man, sprinting through the halls of school, hiding in and on top of locker, could this day hold any more surprises for me? Well of course it could, this is Korea after all. As any traditional Friday night in Korea should, our dinner party was followed with a round of noraebanging. I think it's safe to say I've now noraebanged with every group of people imaginable, friends, staff, students, parents of students, and children, I guess I just need a few ajummas and my life will be complete.



Principal and I

Despite the fact that I was utterly exhausted by the time I arrived home that evening I couldn't have asked for a better day with my staff and students. I was asked a few times what sports day is like in America and was met with shocked faces when I told them we



Samgyeopsal party!!

didn't have such a thing. It's only fair though considering these kids are stuck in school until 10pm every other day of the year, they deserve a break once in a while, and boy do they take full advantage of it. It's days like these that remind me how much I love this job, and why I made the decision to stay for another year. The students never cease to amaze me and have grown to be some of my best friends here in Korea. It's funny because I usually opt to hang with them rather than sit at the "teachers table" which is occasionally met with confusion from the rest of my staff, but what can I say, they're just more fun.