

Orthodontic Olympics: Those Other O-Rings

On January 6th, the Orthodontic Olympics began. This seasons game was hosted in Park Ridge, Illinois by Dr. Gartner. Representing the United States was none other than a sophomore girl from Chicago, Illinois with a bad overbite. Going into this competition, all odds were against her. The gaps between her teeth were exceedingly large and her overbite huge. It seemed the O-Rings were truly being put to the test. Everyone knew making her teeth straight by February of 2006 for her senior year, when the Olympics ended would not be an easy task, but most had faith.

In the heat of the competition, February of 2005, progress seemed well. All the brackets, O-Rings, and wires, were holding up well. The underdog from Chicago was wearing her rubber bands religiously and had her head in the game. Until, one tragic morning in March, it seemed one of the O-Rings could not withstand the pressure. The O-Ring that had stretched to keep the girl's two front teeth together snapped in half. This tragedy seemed a set back for the young girl. Many did not believe she could prove successful and predicted she would not make it out of the Orthodontic Olympics by her senior year with straight teeth.

However, the girl never lost faith. She was determined to get back on track and put her all into winning a beautiful smile. Heading immediately back to Dr. Gartner, she got her O-Rings fixed and was once again on the path to success. Nine more months went by, while the girl continued to wear her rubber bands religiously in hopes of making up for the lost O-Ring. It was then in January that she finally experienced the first step to orthodontic gold when her bottom braces were removed. It was a relief to many because by the looks of it, the bottom O-Rings were on their last limb. For they were injured by the forbidden foods the girl indulged herself in previously. The next month proved nerve-racking. Doubters were asking "Can she do it?" and believers praying that the O-Rings keep strong and withstand the pressure.

Finally, February 14, 2006, came the moment of truth. Did she win the gold and a bright beautiful smile? Or did she win the silver and metal wire braces for months more? Dr. Gartner announced success! She did it! She received the perfect set of teeth that she was fighting. When she walked out of the reception room and into the waiting lounge, spectators cheered loud and asked "how did she do it?" The girl's response was four simple words. It was the O-Rings!

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The Gartner Orthodontics Bobsled team wheels their sled to the start line. An Olympic sized effort is about to be made not to beat an opponent, but instead to rescue a smile from a perilous mis-alignment of teeth. With Dr. Gartner as driver and his talented cast of co-pilots, the team achieves efficient and effective results. Years of training and perfecting their techniques have resulted in the team reaching an elite status. The clock starts ticking the moment the brackets are applied and won't cease until they are removed. The sled accelerates as the arch wire is inserted, and reaches maximum speed when the o-rings are in place.

Every new patient is like a unique track. Some are easy to navigate while others are more complex. Patients range from having under bites to overlapping front teeth. Along the course there are also bumps and dramatic elevation changes. Loose bands, broken appliances, and protruding wires are just a few of the unexpected challenges lying behind each bend. Decisions need to be made on the fly as to the best way to maneuver. Dr. Gartner steers through these obstacles and the rest of the team balances out the sled ensuring a steady ride throughout. As the bobsled crosses the finish line, the braces are removed. The brakes are applied slowly and evenly, by use of a retainer. At the end of the smooth run, the Gartner Orthodontics team earns yet another gold medal. The team immediately re-ascends to the start area to begin treating a new patient; and to embark on another run to turn a ravaged jaw line into a champion.