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Competing for Charity

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Competing for Charity

In benefit for Joplin tornado victims,
Tatar makes *Guinness World Records*

Story by SARAH (ZELLER) JULIAN '07

As of this spring, **Anthony Tatar '91** is a new world record holder. Along with 23 others, he played in the world's longest basketball game — the teams spent 112 hours straight on the court, the equivalent of 168 NCAA college basketball games.

But the game was more than just an attempt to be listed in the *Guinness World Records*. Organized as a charity event, players raised more than \$100,000 to benefit the town of Joplin, Mo., which was devastated in May 2011. A tornado killed 161 people, injured hundreds more and destroyed thousands of homes.

“I was so fortunate to be a part of this wonderful event and cause,” says Anthony, a graphic designer who lives in Florissant, Mo., near St. Louis. “It may have been long and difficult, but it is only one little thing I could do for that town.”

Anthony and his teammates visited Joplin before the event “and were so shocked by the destruction, but also moved by the resilience of the people of Joplin,” he says. “I felt in a little way connected to the town as I had lost my daughter of only 10 years old only a couple of months prior to the tornado. A little part of me was doing this for my daughter as well.”



Anthony Tatar (above) broke a world record while raising thousands of dollars for tornado victims in Joplin, Mo.



Players each spent about 12 hours per day on the court.

According to *Guinness World Records* rules, the 24 participants were divided into two teams. They took turns playing in two-hour blocks, rotating out in order to eat, sleep and seek necessary medical attention. The game started at 5 a.m. on Wednesday, March 21 and ran until 9 p.m. the following Sunday. Players, who ranged in age from their early 20s to late 60s, each spent about 12 hours per day on the court.

The final score was 11,806 for Team Joplin, which included Anthony, and 11,620 for Team St. Louis. By the time the game ended, “we were all in great spirits and a little better men for it,” says Anthony, who scored 874 points. “The total score and points were not what was important; it was what we were playing for and relationships and camaraderie. It is an event I will never forget.”

Donations are still being accepted; proceeds will benefit the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce, which will distribute the funds to families and businesses in need of assistance. To donate, visit worldrecordbasketballgame.com.