

THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT OF MY LIFE

Nobody spoke on the car ride there, not even the driver. Even when we arrived and we started to speak, there was a certain tension, uneasiness in the air. My sixth grade soccer team was about to face the one team we had lost to all season, St. John the Baptist, in the championship game. In the pre-game warm-ups, there was none of the usual laughing and joking around we always did. You could almost mistake us for docile, young athletes! Even the coaches had little to say as they walked to the sideline. But this soccer game would soon change all of our lives.

We had our normal team out, with Nick, our leading goal scorer, as a forward. He was accompanied by John and Jack W. At midfield, we had Erik, Jack K., and Will. They had the hard job, constantly running. On defense, we had me on the right side along with Colin at right center. And on the left side we had Kevin and Gino. And finally, Matt was in goal. On the other team, they had one dangerous gigantic forward that could shred any defense. I knew from experience. After an eternity, the game began.

The roar from the crowd was deafening as if a brass trumpet were being blown right in my ear. I could barely hear the starting whistle blow and the game began. We came out firing, driving down deep into enemy territory until a defender slammed the ball away from us, and it was their turn. The next few drives were a blur; it was a mix of bad ball handling and good defense and goaltending. But then the mammoth forward of theirs streaked down the field and popped in two quick goals. I remember looking at the scoreboard and being overcome with anguish. It was like being smashed by a 500 pound anvil. My hope was lost. The next few minutes were like trying to fight as you are constantly being shot. Taking advantage of our pain, the big player stole the ball from Jack W. and swooped upon me like a falcon. I managed to knock the ball loose and it was drifting towards the line. It was a race to the ball. As we dashed to the ball, I saw something blazing out of the corner of my eye. Suddenly Colin materialized in front of me, running like there was lava right behind him. He took the ball and lobbed it to Nick. With newfound confidence, Nick single-handedly drove down the field and scored, as time expired in the first half. The Nativity fans erupted. We were back in this game.

Our coaches seemed to find confidence, as well as our team. Now they got into it, too. We had a dominating second half; it was nearly always on their side. Nick zipped in another goal. But soon enough, our team lost the momentum, and they drove down the field and the scariest thing happened. With one minute left, a player of theirs shot the ball right over our heads. I looked back and saw the ball flying to the corner of the net. But Matt came through and jumped so high (I thought he had springs in his legs) and saved the goal as time expired. I breathed again. But it wasn't over yet. We had overtime to worry about.

We were tired, but we kept fighting. During the first overtime, nothing happened. I don't think anyone got a shot on goal. And soon enough, double overtime started. The coach took me out because I was in for so long. I could barely talk. With two minutes left, Jack, Nick, and John were dashing down the field. Nick did a long pass to Jack who tipped it to John. And suddenly, everything was in slow motion. From 18 yards away, John shot. The whole world seemed to not even breathe as the shot found its location, in the corner of the net! The roar afterward could have been mistaken for an earthquake. We stormed the field, mugging John. We all smelled like gasoline, but who cared? We were so happy; the referee had to blow the whistle twice to get our attention. But he only said this: GAME OVER! We had won.

Looking back on this, there is one life lesson I learned from it; never give up. We were outmanned and outgunned, but we never gave up. They had already beaten us, but we never let down. We were never expected to be a good team, but we were; we were never supposed to make the playoffs, but we did; we were never supposed to be the sixth grade champions, but we were.

On the way there, we never spoke. On the way back, believe me, we had plenty to say.

By David Laird Grade 8

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