

Father's Eyes

This teenager lived alone with his father, and the two of them had a very special relationship. Even though his son was always on the bench, his father was always in the stands cheering. He never missed a match. This young man was still the smallest of the class when he entered high school. But his father encouraged him but also made it very clear that he did not have to play soccer if he didn't want to. But the young man loved to play soccer and decided to hang in there. He was determined to try his best at every practice, and perhaps he'd get to play when he became a senior. All through high school he never missed a practice nor a game, but remained a bench warmer all four years. His faithful father was always in the stands, always with words of encouragement.

When the young man went to college, he decided to try out for the soccer team as a "walk-on." Everyone was sure he could never make the cut, but he did. The coach admitted that he kept him on the roster because he always puts his heart and soul to every practice, and at the same time provided others with the spirit and desire that they badly needed. The news that he survived the cut thrilled him so much that he rushed to the nearest phone and called his father. His father shared the excitement and was sent season tickets for all the college games. This persistent athlete never missed a practice during his four years at college, but he never got to play the game.

It was the end of his senior season and as he trotted on to the field to warm-up for practice before a big match, the coach handed him a telegram. The young man read it and became deathly silent. He then mumbled to the coach that his father died this morning. He then asked the coach if it was alright to miss practice today. The coach put his arm gently around his shoulder and said, "Take off the rest of the week, and don't even plan to come back to the game until Saturday."

Saturday arrived and the match wasn't going well. In the second half, the other team finally broke a scoreless tie. The young man, left the field and went into the empty locker room to gather his thoughts. As he ran onto the sidelines, the coach and his players were astounded to see their faithful teammate back so soon. "Coach, please let me play. I've just got to play today," said the young man. The coach pretended not to hear him. There was no way he wanted his worst player in this close and important of a match. But the young man persisted and the coach feeling sorry for him, told him to go to the center stripe.

Before long the coach, players and everyone in the stands could not believe their eyes. This little unknown, who had never played before was doing everything right. Before you knew it, he had played one of his teammates through for the equalizer and then in the final minute headed the ball past the keeper off a cross. The fans broke loose, his teammates hoisted them onto their shoulders. Such cheering you never heard!

Finally, after the stands had emptied and the team showered and left the locker room, the coach noticed the young man was sitting quietly in the corner alone. The coach came to him and said, "Kid I can't believe it. You were fantastic! Tell me what got into you? How did you do it?"

He looked at the coach with tears in his eyes, and said, "Well you knew my dad died, but did you know that my dad was blind?" The young man swallowed hard and forced a smile. "Dad came to all my games, but today was the first time he could see me play, and I wanted to show him I could do it!"

I just put this story because I liked it and I thought that it might put things into perspective. Kids all want to succeed for various reasons.