

The Boy, who liked football

Daniel Janeček

James lived in a house with his parents. Every Monday he went to play football with his friends after school. He loved the game. He loved the moments when he scored goals.

Once a year, the school had a football tournament, when the best were elected to play for the school team. The school team had beautiful jerseys and everybody wanted to play there. But there were only twelve people that could play. James wished he could play but he never got the chance. He even wanted to play so much, he started practicing after school alone. He always took his ball and went outside. Other boys laughed at him. They said: „You will never be good at football as us.“ James ignored them, he thought they were wrong. As the days passed by, he became better and better at football. He even started scoring more goals when he played with his friends. They wanted to stop him from getting better and better, they wanted to play for the school team. So sometimes his football boots disappeared, and they suddenly appeared after the practice. He was very sad. It didn't help them - he started practicing even more.

There was still a lot of time till the football tournament should start, but on Thursday morning, during PE, their teacher Mr. Tomlinson said: „I know its early, but you should start thinking about the football tournament“. Then they played a game of football. After the game, Mr. Tomlinson stopped James and said: „Seems like you are getting better and better. Continue like this and you might end up in the school team.“ „Thank you,“ James said. Mr. Tomlinson smiled. Then he went to change his clothes. Later that day, he went to practice football. He was very happy because of what Mr. Tomlinson told him. So the days went on and on and the big day was getting nearer and nearer. James started practicing, even more, he often stayed on the pitch so long, he didn't do his homework for the next day.

It was the last evening before the big day. He was so excited for tomorrow, he couldn't sleep. And finally, it was here, the day the school team was selected. He woke up and he looked at the clock. He was late! He quickly got dressed and rushed to school. When he arrived, his classmates were already playing their first match. They needed somebody to substitute, but there was nobody. Then James quickly went on the pitch and started playing right away. He had to play the striker. The opponents were older, and of course, stronger. He fell on the ground quite a few times. They were losing 3-0. Then this action happened. The goalkeeper passed the ball to the left defender, the defender had a beautiful set of passes with the central midfielder. The midfielder sent the ball behind enemy defenders and it was James job to finish the action. He very quickly got to the ball and he was going right to the keeper! He shot. The net waved. The ball was in! He was so happy, he could burst into tears of joy, but he knew that they lost so he just smiled. The final score was 5-1 for the opponents. Even though they lost, James was very happy that he scored. The

rest of the day nothing really interesting happened, James, unfortunately, didn't score any other goal.

After all the matches, PE teachers decided what players should play for the school team. They called out: „Dear students, as you know today we will choose twelve of you, that will get to play for the school team. You all have been playing hard to achieve what you have achieved. The results of today's tournament don't matter, what matters is how you have played. Now Mr. Tomlinson will read out the names of players that will play.“ „As a goalkeeper, we chose Thomas Black, our defenders will be Keiron Barber, Lukas Bell, and Henry Fox. The midfielders are... .. And the last striker is James Paul. James was very happy and proud of himself. He wasn't in the starting formation, but he will play. Days passed and he was getting ready for the big match.

Finally, the day was here. James woke up, knowing today is the day, that all his preparations were done for. And so he had a big breakfast and put on his clothes. Their school bus was waiting before the school, he was there just on time. When they arrived, Mr. Tomlinson spoke up: „Today is the day we all have been waiting for. Today we win or we lose.“ Then they dressed into the jerseys and went onto the pitch. James saw their opponents and he got a bit afraid. But he knew he had to try his best, no matter how they look. After the warm-up, the match started. James didn't get a chance to play till the second half. Then Mr. Tomlinson called him. „James I need you to play the left winger. I'm sure you will do good. Try your best“ and Mr. Tomlinson smiled. James went on the pitch. The score was 0- 1 for them. He played well, but he made quite a lot of mistakes, one of them led to another goal in their net. James knew he has a few minutes and he will be back on the bench. So he tried as never before. The left defender passed him the ball, he dribbled through two enemy players, he passed to the central midfielder and he ran into the box. The midfielder crossed the box and James scored a beautiful header. He celebrated with his teammates. Then he had to substitute.

He went on the pitch again just eight minutes before the end, the score was equalised(3-3). Everybody thought the game would go into extra time, till this happened. It was three minutes into the final whistle when James passed the ball to the midfielder, he passed it to the defender and the defender passed a perfect ball for the right winger. The right winger passed to James and he could shoot! He could score the decisive goal for his team! But instead of shooting, he passed the ball to his teammate and he scored the goal easily. Everybody celebrated! They won! They lifted the trophy and then they went into the cabin to get dressed. Mr. Tomlinson spoke up, yet again: „This day has been fantastic, thank you all for your participation. Thanks to everyone we made our dream come true!“ And they cheered. Then they began shouting: „We are the champions, we're the number ones!“

James knew he could have scored the last goal, but he knew this was the better way. „All this that happened was so unexpected“ he thought. And he couldn't do anything but to smile.