

My First Soccer Practice

jodilgil@gmail.com

“Sweaty palms and a churning stomach never go well before running,” I think to myself,

as I prop my butt in the car with all of my soccer supplies. Soccer has always been one of my favorite sports, but sometimes the whole drive to soccer, meeting the new players, and secretly showing off your skills towards the end of practice can be nerve-wracking. Usually the first practice is great throughout, but will this one be different?

The drive to soccer could basically be summed up by me squirming in my seat and looking anxiously out the window. I kept wiping my palms on my white shirt about every 30 seconds before I felt like I was reaching dehydration. Yet, at the same time, I was super excited to meet most of my old teammates that would still be on my soccer team this year! Lucky for me, all this thinking quickened my time and before we knew it, we were in the parking lot of our soccer academy. My twin sister Hannah and I walked out of the car, surprised to find we were the second and third players there. Our close friend Ash was kicking her soccer ball against the fence with such force, it made my kicks look like mere passes. As more of my old friends arrived, I saw a couple of new kids disperse to each other and quietly talk in a small group. Lucky for the rest of the old teammates, our previous coach finally showed up and introduced the entire team to each other. The new players' names were Savannah, Emily, Chanelle, O' Dallas, Rosemary, Bella, and Camilla. Unfortunately, everyone including the new kids had to run an exhausting lap around the soccer field.

After the lap, everyone gathered in a circle to play a fun game called The Circle of Death. The point of the game is to make good passes and keep the ball away from the two defenders, which in this case would be in the middle. If the ball is touched by either defender, the player who last touched it goes into the middle and picks a player from the circle. The two then become the new defenders. If they don't touch the ball by the time the players have passed it to each other ten times, the defenders run through a player-made tunnel and the game ends. After the team finished the game, we all took a water break. I tried to be a little bit more outgoing than usual and I ended up making conversation with Rosemary, who was a defender in soccer just as I was. Just as I stopped talking with her, it was declared that the whole team would scrimmage against each other! I picked team blue along with Rosemary, Michelle, Abigail, Emily, Jenna, Hannah, and Coach Brian. The game started, and I gladly made little bits of conversation with Chanelle, who was a forward on the orange team. She and I really hit it off, and she even gave me some pointers and compliments on my footwork. Unfortunately, near halftime, she got switched to the blue team and Hannah took her place.

At halftime, everyone was super dehydrated and basically chugged their waters in three sips. I tried my best to drink all of the water I needed without having to throw up during the last half of the scrimmage, but the fact that I was out of shape didn't exactly help my case. I guess everyone else felt the same way and they started taking tinier sips while chatting in separate enclosed groups. Bella was on my right, and I complimented her on her skills. She and I then proceeded to talk about how hot it was on the field, until it was almost time to scrimmage again. Right before the scrimmage though, I complimented almost everyone new on the team on how I liked their soccer skills or name. They complimented me back and I started thirty

second mini conversations even as we were all running back on the field. Now if you don't know, the teams always switch their sides of the fields in soccer and so this time, the blue team was up-field. Our team felt like we were in a much more useful position, and ended up scoring pretty often. I talked to Emily, the goalkeeper, a tiny bit and she was actually pretty nice. The blue team finished with the winning score, and everyone scurried to their waters to rehydrate themselves.

By the end of the day, my first soccer practice turned out really great and I was nonchalant. My anxiety was expunged by the attainment of success! Every time I experience my first soccer practice of the season, I realize that anxiety just brings me down on the activities I love most. Hopefully more of my soccer practices can be just as and even more enjoyable than my first!