

The Goal not Scored

Arif rubbed his knees gingerly. He knew that he had to be fit for the next day's match. The inter-house matches were going on and he was going to make sure that he played well in the next match. They were going to meet the Red House in the next match and the Reds had been claiming that they had never lost to the Blues. Arif was sure that there was always going to be a first time. The match was also important because his team, the Blue House, needed a win to get the two points necessary for them to get into the finals. He was their star player and could not afford to be injured for such an important match.

The amount of practice he and his teammates had put in before the match also had been phenomenal. Arif was having the feeling that they were playing some very important tournament, when it was actually only a small match between the different houses in the same school.

“This is going to be our most important match”, said Vikas the captain of the Blues, trying to lift the morale of his team before the match. “Give everything.” he said. “We want a victory at any cost. I repeat, we want a victory at any cost.”

They had practised till all of them had been completely tired. Their game plan was almost final and they were beginning to play as a team. They had plenty of coordination too.

“There is no reason why we should not win this match,” said Santosh, their goalkeeper.

“We won't lose unless you concede a goal.” said Vikas.

“I won't let the ball get past me”, said Santosh with determination. “The Reds are going to lose this time !”

They still remembered, with anger, the last match they had played with the Reds in the previous year's finals. They had been leading by a goal till half-time, after which the Reds had turned violent. The blues had become slightly subdued by the violent tactics and the Reds had used the resultant confusion to strike two quick goals towards the end of the game. This time, the Blues had decided that they would not allow the Reds to get away with their rough tactics.

The team went to the ground with determination. The Reds were already on the ground. They too looked confident. Among other things, the main strength of the Reds was their goalkeeper, Praveen. Everyone believed that it would be very difficult to get the ball past him. Their players also looked smart in their red-coloured T-shirts and shorts. The supporters of the two teams were lined up on both sides of the playground. As the match was expected to create a lot of tension and excitement, they had taken no chances with the refereeing. They had convinced their sports teacher, Mr, Sahu, to stand in as the referee for the match. Mr Sahu gave the whistle and the match got underway.

With the kick-off the match started. It was tougher than what Arif had imagined. The Reds obviously had the impression that Arif was the star player of the Blues and had decided to target him from the beginning. Even as Arif would be thinking of getting to the ball, he would find that a Red house player would come out of nowhere and stop him by force. These attacks did fetch their team a couple of free kicks, but Arif was beginning to feel the pressure of the game, every time he was pushed on to the ground. For a while, he tried to stay away from the ball. He noticed that the player of the Reds, who was marking him was paying no attention to the ball and was trying to keep a close watch on Arif.

The game had begun to get rough. Arif felt that the Reds were adopting their usual strategy. However, this time the Blues had responded well. The players of both sides were seen falling on the ground or nursing their injuries. Soon neither of the teams was able to make much headway and the game was being played in the midfield only.

Arif knew that the Blues had to score in order to get the two points. He had to run fast enough and also introduce an element of surprise in order to get

rid of the player who was marking him. He ran towards the ball and with a sudden action he stopped. Then he turned and ran back. The player who was marking him was caught off guard. Arif was fairly deep into the rival territory by now and the other players of his team had realized his position. Vikas managed to move along the flanks and sought out Arif who was free of the player who had been marking him. Arif got a beautiful through pass and he dribbled the ball close to the opponent's goal post. There was total confusion at the goalpost of the Reds. There were also a couple of Blue players who were adding to the confusion. They seemed to be pushing against each other and Arif tried to dribble through the confusion. Now he was very close to the goalpost and his primary task was to put the ball past the goalkeeper who had valiantly foiled their earlier attempts.

As he jumped over a player who had fallen over the ground. Arif realized that it was the goalkeeper and he seemed to be badly injured. For a moment, Arif had a vision of the vacant and unprotected goalpost where he could push the ball through and claim his team's rightful victory. Then he realized that the referee had not noticed the fallen goalkeeper. Arif stopped by the ball and did not shoot. There were cries of "shoot" from his team-mates, but Arif did not. He was signalling to the referee showing him the injured player. The referee noticed the injured player and decided to stop the game.

The goalkeeper, Praveen seemed to be injured seriously. He was not able to walk by himself and had to be carried off the ground unconscious. They had to complete the match in his absence. Another of the Reds took Praveen's place at the goalpost and the play was resumed. There were only five minutes left in the game and both the teams tried their best to score. However, the game got even more rough and during much of this short period, the game took place in the midfield and neither of the teams could do any scoring. They had to console themselves with a draw and split with one point each from the game. The Blues went back disappointed-they had missed the chance to go up in the tournament.

"What were you doing there with the ball?" asked Vikas, the captain of the Blues, unable to hide his anger and frustration. "There, at that moment, you had the goalpost undefended before you and, of all things you had to call up the

referee. It seemed as if you did not want the Blues to win.”

“No, what he did was right,” protested Santosh, their goalkeeper. “Winning is not that important. Even if Arif had kicked the ball over the unconscious goalkeeper, the victory would have been meaningless. And if the referee had noticed the injury earlier, he would anyway have stopped the play.”

“Yes,” agreed the rest of the team and Vikas also had to accept the general view.

Arif's action seemed to have touched a chord with the Reds who were known to be the most aggressive of the lot. In the remaining matches and in the next few years they were much more polite and softer in their approach to the game. Arif's gesture seemed to make them also realize that there was something in the game, which was more than merely winning it.

- Manoj T. Thomas

Glossary

gingerly	/ˈdʒɪndʒli/	carefully for fear of a mistake or of getting hurt
phenomenal	/fɪˈnɒmɪnəl/	strange and unusual
tournament	/ˈtʊənmənt/	number of games played between different players
morale	/məˈrɑ:l/	level of confidence
at any cost	/ət ˈeni kɒst/	extremely important
coordination	/kəʊˈɒdɪˈneɪʃn/	working together
concede	/kɒnˈsi:d/	give away, yield after disagreeing
determination	/dɪˈtɜ:mɪˈneɪʃn/	strong will to succeed
violent	/ˈvaɪələnt/	fierce and usually dangerous
subdued	/sʊbˈdʒʊd/	quiet, controlled

tactics	/ˈtæktɪks/	clever plans
resultant	/rɪˈzʌltənt/	the thing that has just been mentioned
shorts	/sɔːts/	short trousers
excitement	/ɪkˈsaɪtmənt/	happiness and enthusiasm
underway	/ˈʌndəˈweɪ/	having started
free kicks	/friː kɪks/	to kick the ball without any opposition
to get rough	/tʊ ɡet rʌf/	difficult to hit the ball
strategy	/ˈstrætədʒi/	tactics
to make headway	/tʊ meɪk ˈhedweɪ/	to forward
off guard	/ɔf ɡɑːd/	away from guard
flanks	/flæŋks/	left or right side of a game
dribbled	/ˈdrɪbld/	to move the ball along with several short kicks, hits or bounces
valiantly	/ˈvæliəntli/	bravely
shoot	/ʃuːt/	to hit or throw the ball into a goal
console	/kɒnˈsɔːl/	to give comfort or sympathy
disappoint	/dɪsˈpɔɪnt/	cause sorrow because of failing to do what is expected
frustration	/frʌˈstreɪʃn/	feeling annoyed and impatient because you cannot achieve what you want
touched a chord	/tʌtʃtʃ ˈkɔːd/	feel sympathy or enthusiasm
aggressive	/əˈɡresɪv/	quick to attack, threatening
gesture	/ˈdʒestʃ(r)/	a particular feeling or intention

Exercises

Vocabulary

A. Make adverbs from the following words.

(1) ginger (2) complete (3) obvious (4) fast (5) well

B. Write the difference between the following.

- (i) match and tournament
- (ii) practice and practise
- (iii) captain and caption
- (iv) plenty and surplus
- (v) through and thorough
- (vi) moment and movement

C. What are the different meanings of 'shoot' in the following sentences?

- (1) I'm coming out with my hands up : don't shoot.
- (2) We'll be ready to shoot as soon as all the cameras are loaded.
- (3) Let's shoot a game of pool.
- (4) He invited us to his country estate for a week-end shoot.
- (5) Rose bushes shoot again after being cut back.
- (6) Can you shoot a goal from twenty yards out ?
- (7) You want to tell me something ? Well, shoot !

D. Pronounce the following words.

gingerly, game, gem, guard, goal, ground, gesture, general

Comprehension

A. Answer each of the following questions in about 25 words.

1. Explain the importance of winning the match to the Blues.
2. Why were the Blues angry on their defeat in the last watch ?
3. How did the Red prevent Blues from attacking ?
4. How did Arif change the attitude of the Reds in the coming matches ?
5. What is more important than victory ?

B. Answer each of the following questions in about 50 words.

1. Describe, how Arif succeeded in taking the ball to the goal post of the Reds.
2. Why did Arif not hit the ball into the goal even though he was sure to score a goal ?
3. What qualities of a good player do you notice in Arif ?

Grammar

A. Study these sentences.

- The inter-house matches were going on.
- Arif was having the feeling that they were playing some very important tournament.
- The players were adding to confusion.

B. They were going to meet the Red house. They were beginning to play well as a team.

- The sentences given under 'A' show past continuous tense.
- The sentences given under B have 'going to' form. This form always implies a premeditated intention. The intention is accompanied by a plan.

Now, put the verbs in brackets into simple past or past continuous.

- I (walk) along the streets in Mumbai when I (realize) that a man with a ginger bread, whom I had seen three times already that afternoon (follow) me. To make quite sure, I (walk) on quickly, (turn) right then left and (stop) suddenly at a shop window. I (go) on. Whenever I (stop) he (stop) and whenever I (look) round he (be) still there. He (look) a very respectable type and (wear) very conventional clothes and I (wonder) if he was a policeman or a private detective.

Speaking Activity

- A. Consider yourself a commentator, make a live commentary of the match played between the Red House and the Blue House.
- B. **Ask questions about the match described in the lesson. Use the following words:**
1. between/whom
Between whom was the match played ?
 2. What/ Arif/ feeling
 3. How/the team/enter
 4. The blues/why/disappointed
- C. What are the do's and don'ts of the winners and losers ? Discuss with your friends.
- For example,
- Winners should not laugh at the losers.
 - Losers should not be discouraged.

Writing Activity

- A. Give a pen-portrait of Arif to be published in the school magazine. You may write about Arif's exemplary action. (50 words)

- B. Write the highlights of any memorable match you have watched recently.
(150 words)

Think it over

- A. All the sports and games are played according to the rules. The rules are enforced by a referee or an umpire. Who knows the rules better, the player or the referee?
- B. Think of two arguments supporting the Arif's viewpoint.
- C. Suppose there is a wrong judgement in the field. How should the players react to it.

Things to do

Make a list of the fowls in a game of your choice.

Name of the game

Sl. No.	Fowls
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	

