

Candidate 4 evidence

Happiness is Egg Shaped

If a Martian were to come to earth and watch this spectacle I wonder what they would think? I suppose it would be something along the lines of why is the ball so awkwardly shaped? What's the aim of the game? Why do they have to go backwards to go forwards? Why is there really fit ones and really fat ones? I wonder if Martians even play sports, do they understand the sheer elation that competition can bring. Perhaps they could use some superpowers to excel and surpass us at our own game. The chances of extra-terrestrial beings arriving on this earth is improbable but ,if they did, I am sure my chances of persuading them to love this game as much as I do are odds on. Let's start from the beginning, and why I love rugby.

Even although I had been on this earth for six years I don't think I had experienced the sheer happiness and sense of belonging that I felt in the car on the way home that day. The memories are still engrained in my mind like initials carved on a tree. The lights were glaring, the grass was glimmering and it was a crisp dark winter's night. There was laughter and sporadic shouts for the ball to be passed as the teams warmed up. There was a mass of black and red strips swarming round the pitch. As my mum and I approached the group that we guessed were my age, I could feel eyes locking on to me, staring me down, more and more with every step I took. I could sense everyone was talking about me and I started to question why I had come. But, to my surprise, when I finally reached the squad I was greeted by a small, spindly figure who introduced himself as Adam with a welcoming smile. Adam turned out to be the coach's son and he accompanied me to the rest of the players. After quick introductions the coach went straight into a game, which I was really nervous about as I would be getting physically tackled for the first time. The training began and it wasn't long before I saw the ball hurling towards me. I reached out with my widespread hands and somehow caught the ball. I froze with panic like a deer in headlights. I didn't know what to do with this odd shaped ball. Before I knew it, I was hurtled backwards onto the clammy ground and ,even though this took the wind out of me and I felt slightly uneasy, I got a frisson of excitement and from that moment I knew this was my sport and it would become much more than just the feeling of that first tackle.

Rugby took over my life not just playing games on a Sunday but it gave me a great group of

friends, taught me discipline and gave me goals in life and something to strive towards. I soon picked up on the essential skills required to become a better player. I started passing the ball, making the tackles, seeing the spaces and playing a big part in the team. The coaches were great but I also spent a lot of time learning from online videos; rugby started to take over my life. All I wanted to do was eat, sleep and breath rugby. My game started to improve and I loved the praise I received from the coaches, parents and my fellow players. As years went by I won player of the year for the club on a few occasions and I was put forward for trials which would take me a step closer to my dream. Everything was going so well until the day of the accident.

It wasn't even rugby related, that's the most frustrating part. Normally safety nets are there to save lives but on this day it ruined mine. It was one of my team mate's birthdays and we were invited to an activity day, all was fun and games until the final event.

As always I put in 110% but as I fell from the obstacle and my hand caught in the netting, I felt my shoulder

being wrenched from its socket. One thought went through my head when the sudden realisation hit me that I had dislocated my shoulder.

I was right. After two years of rehabilitation and continued attempts to play I have had to give up on my dream. But as you grow up you realise that dreams don't always come true, they might just change slightly. I still attend training and feel part of the team, they call me the water boy but that's ok because they are my mates and the teasing makes it more bearable. But the passion continues.

As the band of kilted musicians stand in the middle of the pitch, the roaring crowd falls silent and rises to their feet. The players are lined up like soldiers, shoulder to shoulder as if waiting for orders. The pipes blast into action and all the Scots start to chant the words of the national anthem. The excitement, anticipation and realisation that the game is about to begin. When that first whistle is blown it puts a smile upon my face and many others in the hope that your home team will come out on top. As both teams' scores build, the clock ticks on and voices rise as the tension mounts; anyone could steal the win in the blink of an eye. A lot comes down to fitness but there is also a degree of mental strength required to keep 110% effort throughout the game. I can remember how this felt when I played as you were always gasping for breath, legs feeling like lead and the agony from all the painful clashes.

It truly is a challenge in itself to keep playing as hard as you can. So I cheer even louder to try help them through these tough moments in their game. Sometimes they win sometimes they lose but on the odd occasion that they are victorious it's a special memory that stays with you for a lifetime.

So if a Martian spaceship landed on earth tomorrow in Scotland I would greet them, saltire in hand and whisk them off to Murrayfield. They'd soon come to terms with the rules and understand that an ovate ball adds to the excitement due to its unpredictability. Hopefully, after their brief encounter of this magnificent game, they'd come to the realisation that they have experienced the best sport in the world, or even the universe, and that 'happiness truly is egg shaped'.

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