

CAMILLA
KNIGHT

KURTIS
PANKOW

AMY
GALLAGHER

DON'T FORGET TO HAVE FUN!



What kids hear when parents cheer

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Welsh translation by Tomos Watson.

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TO HAVE FUN!

What kids hear when parents cheer

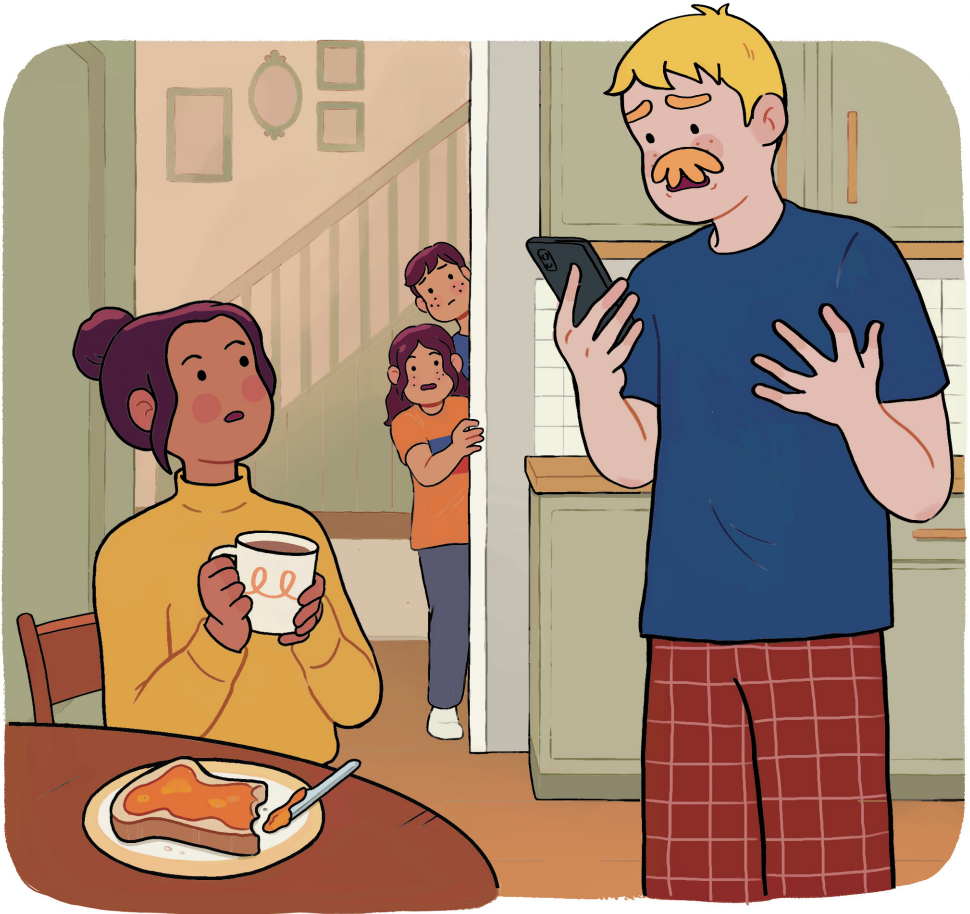
David and Emily LOVED sport. Swimming, running, cricket, rugby, football. Anything that let them move fast and have fun with their friends made them happy. The challenge to get better, learn new things, and getting to spend time with Mum and Dad, the fun was all around!



More than anything, Emily and David loved sport because of their friends. Some friends were on their team, sometimes their friends from school were their opponents! Any day they got to play, they knew they would get to see their friends, and that made it extra special.



On match days, David and Emily woke up early. They were too excited to sleep! Their parents always wanted them to sleep more so they had to tip-toe down the stairs. When they got to the kitchen, they heard Mum and Dad already making breakfast.



“Whose week is it?” Dad asked, still sleepy. “It’s yours,” said Mum quickly, “I had to stand there in the cold and listen to the other parents last weekend.” Dad looked at his phone and groaned. “Dylan’s Mum will be there this week. You know how hard she is on the kids!”

Emily looked at David and David looked at Emily. They were both surprised; didn't Mum and Dad get along with the other parents? Were they always upset when they had to take them to play? David and Emily started to feel bad. Mum and Dad took them to so many matches, it was sad to think they didn't like it!





They both snuck back upstairs and pretended not to have heard Mum and Dad. When they came down again, Mum and Dad were smiling and excited. “Ready for the match you two?” asked Dad with a big smile. “Don’t forget to have fun!” said Mum as she put on her coat. “I’m visiting Grandma and Grandpa today so your Dad will be cheering you on. Love you, and play well for them!”

After a big breakfast Emily and David were ready to go. As they drove in the car, Dad asked them questions about the match. Emily liked the questions to help her focus on the match, but it just made David nervous.



“What’s the game plan today Emily?” asked Dad. “We’re working on attacking!” she replied. “That means you’ve got to take chances and really focus, David. Right?” Dad said as he looked at David. “Make sure you give Emily good chances!”

David could feel the butterflies in his stomach as they arrived at the pitch. He was looking around for his team so he could get away from the questions. There they were! David hurried out of the car towards his teammates, as his dad shouted “Remember to have fun!” behind him.



As they passed through the car park, they saw Dylan's Mum was giving him one of her famous 'pep talks.' "Remember Dylan," his Mum warned, "we pay a lot of money for you to play this game and do extra training. You should be the star player every match!" Emily and David looked at each other. Thank goodness their Mum and Dad never said things like that!



After warm-up, the team came together around Coach. “How is everyone today?” their Coach asked. “GREAT!” yelled Emily. She was always the most excited for the match to start. Coach laughed. “Alright team, what’s the most important part of the match today?” “To have fun!” everyone replied, except Dylan. Emily and David hadn’t heard him say a word since they passed him in the car park. He had barely looked at anything except his shoes.



The whistle went and they were off! After some back-and-forth with both teams working hard, Emily won the ball and got it to David.



David danced around two players and carried the ball well into the opposing end. Emily had broken free and was wide open for a pass. David sent the ball her way, and Emily ran, jumped and executed perfectly!

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“That should have been you, Dylan!” It was Dylan’s Mum, yelling from the sidelines. “You train too much to not try to make plays like that!” she yelled. Dylan was frozen with embarrassment. He couldn’t look at any of his teammates.



“It’s okay!” Emily said to Dylan. “We’ll get another chance,” David chimed in. Dylan kept his eyes down. “I won’t,” he whispered. Emily put her arm around him. “Don’t worry Dylan, you’ll get the next one!” Dylan looked at his shoes. His Mum was still yelling, but they were far enough away that he couldn’t quite hear. “I hate when she does that,” Dylan mumbled.



At halftime, the team went over to Coach. “Great work everyone! I can see that you’re all trying hard. We’re getting lots of good chances. Everyone is playing so well. Great attacking! Especially you Dylan!”



Dylan went red and looked at his shoes again. “I think I’d rather give someone else a chance this half,” said Dylan quietly. Emily and David looked at each other.

“You can’t give up, Dylan!” said Emily.
“You’ve been working really hard, we’ll
get the ball to you!” Dylan wouldn’t
look at her. “It’s okay Emily, I don’t
want my Mum to yell
again. I’ll hear enough
on the drive home.”



Before Emily could think of something
to say, the referee blew their whistle.
“Okay everyone, remember to work
on our attacking and have fun!” Coach
called out to the players.





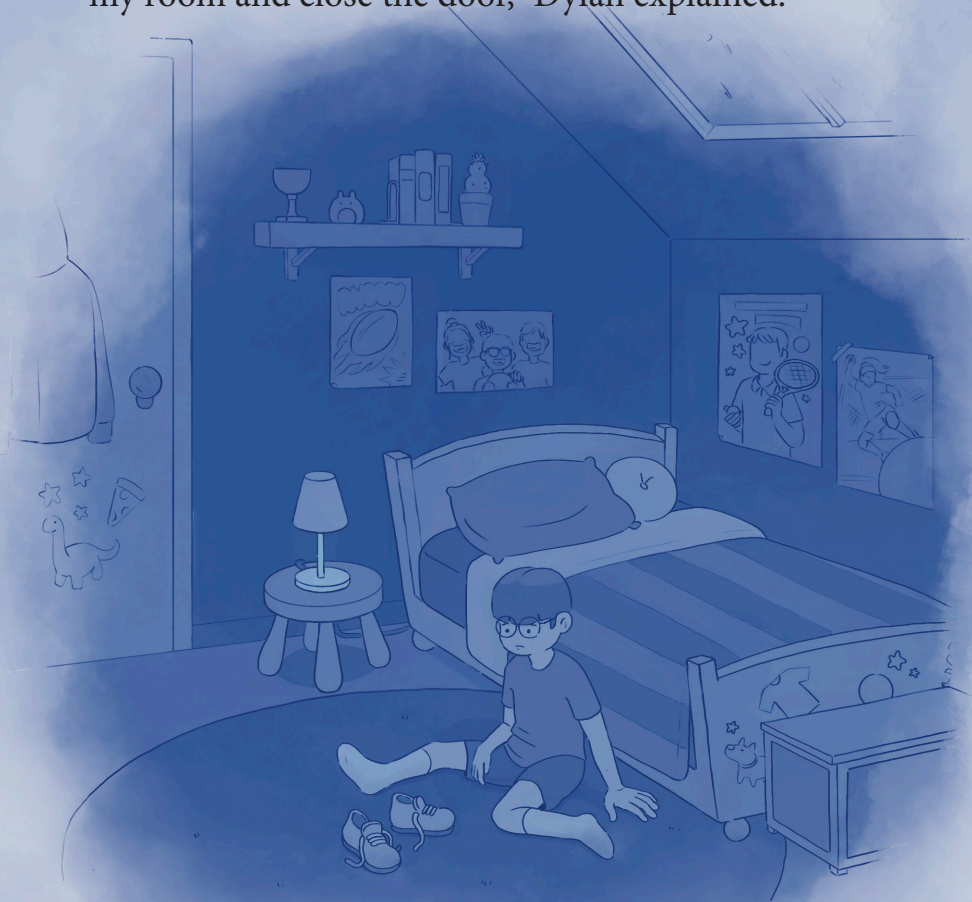
Emily and David wanted to win for Dylan. Up and down the field they ran, passing and tackling just like in practice. They focused on working hard and attacking, just like Coach said.



They scored, and scored, and scored again! The whistle went to signal the end of the game. David ran over to Dylan to celebrate. “We got you that win Dylan!” David said happily.



Dylan was looking at the ground again. “Thanks, but it won’t help,” he said sadly. “What do you mean?” David asked. “The ride home, I’ll hear about how well everyone else did and all the mistakes I made until I can get into my room and close the door,” Dylan explained.



“Mum gets mad when I make a mistake, she says she’s wasting her money. I know I’m not the best, but I want to try. She makes me scared to try.”

David didn't know what to say. He didn't like when his dad quizzed him in the car on the way to the match, but it didn't make him scared to try! And, he knew Emily liked the pre-match quizzes, so he found it hard to talk about that with his dad. But this seemed different.



“Looks like I have to go. Maybe see you at practice next week, David,” Dylan whispered as he walked to meet his Mum, who was marching across the pitch.

After a quick chat with Coach, David and Emily found their Dad, who, as usual, was waiting in the car park. They liked that because the walk from the pitch gave them time to talk about the match between themselves. After what Dylan went through though, David and Emily had something to say.



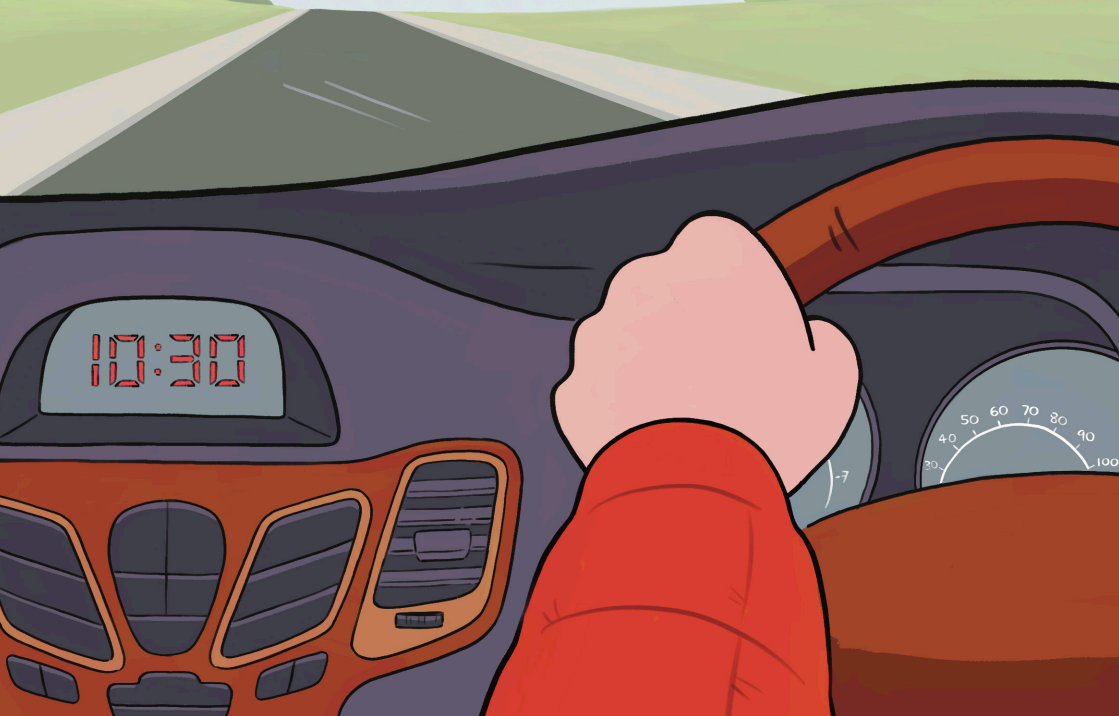
In the car, Emily looked at David and David looked at Emily. David said, “Hey Dad, I don’t know if you noticed but Dylan had a really hard time with his Mum at the match today. I wanted to say thank-you for cheering instead of yelling on the sideline.”

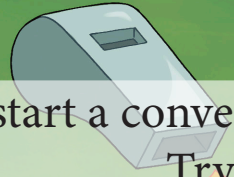
Dad raised his head and looked at David in the mirror. “You noticed that, did you?” asked Dad. “Yes,” said Emily and David together. “It makes Dylan really sad, and we’re sad for him,” said David. “We really try hard to stop his Mum getting mad,” Emily sighed.





Dad was quiet for a minute. “I guess parents forget what children hear sometimes. I’m sure Dylan’s Mum thinks she’s helping. I can try and talk to her if you’d like me to? And keep cheering, too - is that what you want?”





Want to start a conversation

Try these

1 Thinking about the story, how do you think the parents make David and Emily feel before the match?

2 Why do you think Dylan's mum is shouting so much during the match?

3 What impact does Dylan's mum have on Emily and David?

4 How do you think Emily and David felt when talking to their dad after the match?



What do you know about sport in your home?
Ask your parents these questions!

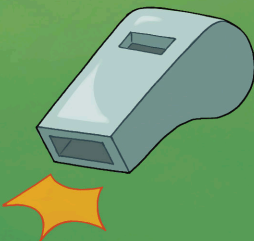


5 What are the best things your parents could say before you go out to compete in a sporting event or a match?

6 What would you like your parents to do when you are competing or playing?

7 When you've finished a match or a game, what is the most important thing your parents can do? Why is that so important?

8 What do you wish parents knew about your experiences when you are playing sport?





Kurtis Pankow, PhD

Dr Kurtis Pankow's research explores how we can help young people have better mental health through sport, and how we can make research easier for people to use in their day-to-day lives. His favourite thing about his job is getting to think of big questions and trying to find big answers.

Growing up, Kurtis played all sorts of sports including (Canadian and European) football, baseball, ice hockey, golf, and basketball. His parents and two brothers also loved sports. Kurtis played and coached Canadian football during his studies at university, and worked as a sport scientist in the Canadian Football League for two seasons. He has wanted to write a children's book since 2017.



Camilla Knight, PhD

Prof Camilla Knight's research explores how children can have the best experiences in sport and how parents can help this to happen. She works with lots of different researchers around the world to try and answer these questions. Camilla also works directly with sports organisations, parents, and children to help create positive and enjoyable sporting experiences for all involved.

With a son of her own, Camilla is learning (and at times failing) to put her research into practice in her own life, but knows all she can do is keep trying to get it right! She's excited to share this book with her son and is ready for some honest feedback!



Amy Gallagher, Illustrator & Cartoonist

Amy Gallagher illustration blends playful cartoon aesthetics with engaging storytelling, often using her work to add humor and whimsy to children's education. Her illustrations are filled with charm and a touch of silliness, making learning fun and memorable.

As a cartoonist, Amy captures the quirky, often hilarious moments of life with a significant other through her comics. Her work brings humor and relatability to relationships, offering a joyful perspective on everyday interactions and partnership.

Inspired by shows like Adventure Time, Amy's art is whimsical and playful, designed to spark joy and connect with her audience.

