

# DISCUSSION GUIDE



## Go for the Goal!

Written by Fred Bowen

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Ages 7–12 | Realistic Fiction | Series: Fred Bowen Sports Story  
AR • RC • Lexile • GRL N; Gr 3

ALIGNED with  
COMMON CORE  
STANDARDS

### ABOUT THE SERIES

Fred Bowen’s fast-paced middle-grade stories offer readers themes of competition, cooperation, facing change, gender roles, overcoming challenges, and new experiences. In addition, they feature play-by-play action, snappy dialogue, and engaging plots. Bowen’s books are not the usual sports-fiction fare; each book loops in a little sports history and includes back matter with fascinating glimpses into that history and the heroes who made it happen.

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Josh just joined the United, a travel soccer team with awesome players. But the United’s season is going down in a string of defeats. Then Josh discovers something about the 1999 United States Women’s World Cup Champions. That group of all-stars worked at being teammates. Maybe their secret strategy will work for the United?

### THEMES:

Collaboration | Team-building exercises | Teamwork  
Friendship | Thinking out of the box | Sports | Soccer  
1999 Women’s World Cup

### WRITING PROMPTS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

aligned with Common Core Reading Standards

#### DIRECTIONS

Use details from the text to support ALL of your responses.

#### CHAPTERS 1–3

Josh and Aidan are excited that they have made the United, a select soccer team. But it’s very different from their old team, the Flames. How does Josh think it’s different? How does his mom think it’s different?

#### CHAPTERS 4–6

List two reasons why the United don’t “click” (play well together) in their first tournament. Now think about the cafeteria setting in chapter 6. Even though the characters aren’t playing soccer, how does the author show that Josh and Aidan’s experience with the Flames was probably a lot different than it is with the United?

#### CHAPTERS 7–9

How does Josh come up with the idea of doing team-building exercises? Why does he think these will help the United in a real game?

#### CHAPTERS 10–12

In chapter 10, how do the United teammates play differently than before? How has the exercise with the purple blanket helped them become better soccer players?

**CHAPTERS 13–15**

How has Josh’s experience on the United changed since the beginning of the story? Choose at least two scenes that show how it has changed.

**CHAPTERS 16–17**

How do Josh and Aidan feel about Evan at the beginning of the book? How do they feel about him at the end? Why have their feelings changed about him?

**OVERALL QUESTION**

In just a few words, write down what this whole story is about (the overall theme or big idea). Explain your response.

**“THE REAL STORY” FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:**

What did you learn about the 1999 U.S. Women’s Soccer Team that you didn’t know? How does the information in “The Real Story” relate to the theme or the plot of the whole story?

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**REVIEWS**

“This is an excellent story of how important it is to work together. Students can relate to how working as a team creates a winning team no matter if it is in sports or a group project for school. This book conveys a positive message that would be a worth addition to any library.”

—*Kutztown University Reviews*

“Excellent reading for sports-oriented students ages 7–12. The exciting narrative and page-turning action keep junior reader interest peaked.”

—*Midwest Book Review*

“What I love about Bowen’s work is that he ties in the team’s action to a historic event... There’s plenty of action, a few interpersonal problems, even scores and rosters, but I like the historical notes at the end.”

—*Ms. Yingling Reads blog*

“Bowen manages to make the reader feel as if he is right there in the middle of the action. Any soccer fan will easily relate to the frustrations of building a team. The universal lesson of working together applies to any sport.

A quick read that lends itself to a good book report choice. Good for the sports enthusiast.”

—*Boys to Books blog*

**AWARDS**

- Delaware Diamonds (nominee, 3–5) —Diamond State Reading Association
- Prairie Pasque Children’s Book Award (nominee) —SDLA, SDRC, South Dakota State Library, South Dakota Elementary School Principals
- Massachusetts Children’s Book Award (master list) —Salem State College

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Fred Bowen is the author of Peachtree’s popular Fred Bowen Sports Story series. A lifelong sports fanatic, he has coached youth league baseball, softball, soccer, and basketball. His kids’ sports column “The Score” appears each week in the

KidsPost section of the *Washington Post*. Bowen lives in Maryland.

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Peachtree Teacher’s Guide for  
**GO FOR THE GOAL!**  
prepared by Peggy Jackson

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