

Fred Bowen

# GO FOR THE GOAL!



**AFRED BOWEN**  
SPORTS STORY



**GO FOR THE  
GOAL!**

**THE BOWEN** series  
**SPORTS STORY**



**THE BOWEN** SPORTS  
**SPORTS STORY**

**GO FOR THE  
GOAL!**

  
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Summary: Thirteen-year-old Josh joins an elite travel league soccer team on which the individual members are all talented but not playing well as a team, so their coach suggests that they do some team-building exercises.

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*For everyone who works so hard to get books to  
kids—especially my friends at Turning the Page,  
First Book, and KPMG’s Family for Literacy*





# *Chapter*

# 1

**J**osh Bradshaw burst through the front door and scrambled upstairs. Aidan McFarland, Josh's best friend, was not far behind.

"Hey, keep it down," Josh's father called as the door slammed behind the boys. "I'm trying to work."

"It's just Aidan and me, Dad," Josh called back. "We're going to my room."

The two friends tossed their backpacks onto the bedroom floor, which was covered in dirty clothes and old school papers. "Man, carrying around all these books should get us in shape for soccer," Aidan said. He



glanced at Josh and added, “Do you think it’s on the website yet?”

“Coach Hodges said she would post the list of players who made the team on Monday,” Josh said.

The boys smiled and sang out together: “And it’s Monday!”

“Where’s your laptop?” Aidan asked, looking around the room.

“I think it’s on my bed somewhere.” Josh pushed away the sheets. “Here it is.” He flipped open his computer and took a deep breath.

“Why are you so nervous?” Aidan said, scooting onto the bed next to Josh. “We’ll make it.”

“I don’t know,” Josh said as he started tapping the keys. “There were a lot of good players at the tryouts. Coach can’t keep everybody.”

“Yeah, but you’re the best scorer,” Aidan insisted. “You must have scored a million goals for the Flames last year.”

“Playing with a rec-league team like the Flames is different,” Josh said. “The United’s

a travel team. They're like All-Stars."

"I know. That's why playing with the United will be so cool," Aidan said. "Everybody's good."

The United website popped up and the boys leaned closer. "Click on *News*," Aidan said.

"There it is!" Josh shouted as he read from the screen. "United Names U-14 Team." His heart jumped. He wasn't at all confident he had made it.

"Come on! Click it!" screamed Aidan.

"Okay, okay," Josh said. A list of names appeared.

#### UNITED ROSTER

Evan Perry	Kadir Sims
Victor Baldassi	Aidan Mcfarland
Robert Brodie	Langston Adams
Dylan Cole	Demetrius Brown
Patrick West	Thomas Smythe
Joshua Bradshaw	Ty Robinson
Mario Barretto	Robin Hall
Noah Stern	Fletcher Downing
Paul Chambers	Walter Winwood

The room was quiet as the boys scanned the list. Then, at the same instant they shouted, "Yes! We made it!"

They jumped off the bed and bounced around the bedroom, bumping chests and throwing clothes into the air. "We are the United! We are the United! We are the United!" they chanted at the top of their lungs.

Mr. Bradshaw stuck his head into the room. "Keep it down, will you," he said sharply. "I told you I was—"

"We made it, Dad!" The words burst out of Josh. "The United! We made the team."

Mr. Bradshaw's head snapped back in surprise. "They've posted the roster already?"

Aidan turned the laptop around. "Take a look."

Josh's father leaned over the screen. A satisfied smile creased his face. "All right!" he said. "Congratulations!" He traded high fives with Josh and Aidan, then looked back at the screen. "Do you know any of these other guys?"

Josh and Aidan studied the roster.

“That guy Mario played in our league last year. He was good,” Josh said. “We got Patrick West too. He’s an awesome goalie.”

“And we played against that kid, Kadir Sims, in rec league,” Aidan said. “He was kind of a whiner. Always looking at the ref to call a penalty.”

“Remember, we were playing *against* him,” Josh said. “Now we’re going to be playing *with* him.”

Josh kept studying the roster. “Evan Perry. He was that kid with the fancy red shoes who played midfield during the scrimmages,” Josh recalled. “He acted like he’s the next Pelé or something.”

“Someone said he played for the United last season,” Aidan said. “He’s good.”

“Victor Baldassi played for the United last season too,” Josh added. “I’ve heard about him. He’s a terrific scorer.” Josh smiled. “I can’t believe we’re going to be playing with these guys.”

“Remember you two are as good as any of these guys,” Mr. Bradshaw said. “Coach picked you because you could help the team.”

Josh was quiet for a moment. He could feel a certain pride swelling up inside him. *I've always wanted to play on a really great team—a team like the United, he thought. And now I've got my chance.*

“When are practices?” his father asked.

“Tuesdays and Thursdays. I guess we start tomorrow.”

“What about games?”

“Click on the schedules,” Aidan said.

A list of dates and team names replaced the roster on the screen.

#### UNITED SCHEDULE

September 1	Labor Day Tournament	TBA
September 8	Tournament	TBA
September 15	Kings*	2 P.M.
September 22	Magic*	Noon
September 29	The Storm*	10 A.M.
October 6	Red Devils*	Noon
October 13	The Dynasty*	2 P.M.
October 20	Columbus Day Tournament	TBA
October 27	The Future*	10 A.M.
November 3	Galaxy*	10 A.M.
November 10	Veterans Day Tournament	TBA
November 17	Majestics*	Noon
November 24	Arsenal*	2 P.M.
December 1	League Tournament	TBA
December 2	League Tournament	TBA

\* League Games—All League Games will be played at the Soccerplex

“The ones with the stars are the league games,” Josh explained. “Coach Hodges said we’re going to play in a bunch of tournaments too.”

“Where’s the coach from?” Mr. Bradshaw asked.

Josh clicked a picture of Coach Hodges and read her biography. “She played four years at University of Notre Dame—”

“They’re good,” Aidan interrupted.

“She’s been coaching the United for three years,” Josh continued. “She’s the real deal.”

“Yeah, she seemed like she knew her stuff at the tryouts,” Aidan said.

Josh clicked a small picture of last year’s United team and it filled the screen.

“I love their uniforms!” Aidan shouted.

“You mean *our* uniforms,” Josh corrected. “Hey look, there’s Evan.”

“Is he wearing red shoes?” Mr. Bradshaw asked.

Josh and Aidan laughed and then returned to surfing through the site, taking



in everything—the schedules, the pictures, the uniforms—in almost reverent silence.

Finally, Josh turned and smiled at Aidan and his dad. “Playing for the United is going to be *so cool!*” he declared.

