

# How Ball Became Life

By Arianna Concepcion

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I arrived to the field exactly at 5:30 and no one was there. Everyone arrived late, even the coach. My friend had told me that practice was at 5:30 but she didn't tell me they always started late.

I never had any experience playing soccer which made it hard for me. I didn't know the rules. I didn't have the technique. I was a newbie. I was just 13 at the time. Before I joined my friend had told me all about them, she had told me that the team was named Atlante and how a couple of classmates from our school went to that team. I've always wanted to play soccer because I always found it fascinating although my parents weren't big fans of soccer. I used to watch students at my school play soccer on the grass field and it was "cool" to be playing soccer. So my friend Sofia (not her real name) helped me out with that.

The players and the coach arrived around 6 pm. Before we started the coach asked me aside from the girls if I had ever played I told him I didn't. He started putting us to play but I knew none of the drills he was making us do. I was kind of clueless. It was pretty embarrassing, but I ended up pulling it together and getting the hang of it.

Once the team started getting comfortable with me they started being very disrespectful. Every single practice they got more comfortable which made them more disrespectful. They used to exclude me from the little groups. There was plenty of times when we arrive to a game and half the team is on one side and the other half is somewhere else. Although my friend Sofia had invited me to the team she still wasn't in the same "group" as I was. When we weren't playing, the team split into two cliques - the more experienced players, and the newbies. Sofia was in the "experienced" clique. I (obviously) was one the newbies. Individually, the experienced players were nice, but together they were all about school drama. Like how embarrassing is it for our team to have like little groups within a team, a team supposed to be united. But not this team, this team was different. I lost all my confidence, that team took my confidence. Every time I would make a mistake I would yell sorry hoping they wouldn't give me so much crap for it. It was pretty hard for me because every day I would come home complaining about my teammates. When I tried out for school soccer I had no confidence, I later realized that my non-confidence is what made me not make it in the varsity team.

After a year with playing with them I was still scared to join them. When I went to my second state cup I still didn't have confidence to go with my team, I stayed with my parents until they called me over to go prepare for the game. The last time I played with them was the second game we had at state cup my dad said that team was no good for me. Before he had always told me to leave the team but this time he was serious. He

hated seeing me like this he told me I deserved a better team, a better soccer experience. So I had to move on and join another team.

I decided to try out for Rebels. Rebels is a club soccer team with about 60 something teams. This club even holds it's own annual tournament. A lot of people from high tech were a part of this club so I did my research and tried out for the team. I think that was the best decision I've ever made. Yeah I didn't make it to the 1st team but the 3rd team is still really good! I'm so grateful for my coach, he helped me improve so much, I gained confidence through my new team. Now I'm not afraid to make a mistake because they understand that I didn't do it on purpose to let them down. Now I tried out for the school soccer team this year and I had way more confidence than last year. I ended up making varsity thanks to my club soccer team and coach.

I've realized that this experience wasn't the most fun experience but it helped me become a better soccer player. All the negative comments about me "not being good enough" made me strive to get even better to prove to them I am good enough. If it weren't for that experience I wouldn't be the soccer player I am today.