

# Playing for Peace

by Paco Iraheta

Four years ago, I was playing soccer with my friends. A group of us from El Salvador had a soccer team in the Hispanic League of Chelsea, MA. We were playing against the Mexican team. In the middle of the game we started to fight against them.

The real problem wasn't the score; the problem was our countries. Because of an old conflict between our countries, we look at most Mexicans like our enemies or rivals, and they look at us like this, too. We made the game a fight, and many people were gravely injured. After the fight, the police and ambulance came to the field and took the injured people to the hospital.

It is interesting when people think any sport helps to build peace. We took the wrong way to build peace, but we learned a lot after the problem. Now, if there is tension during a game, we try to get everything under control as soon as possible to avoid fights. I learned that when you respect the other opinion you get peace. Now, we play just to make new friends, not to lose them, because this world needs us together.

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## Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever played a sport against a team you didn't like? What happened?
2. What lessons do we learn from sports that can help us be peacemakers in our lives?
3. The Olympics is one of the biggest worldwide sporting events that aims to build a peaceful and better world through sport. Do you think this is a good way to promote peace?
4. Can you think of times when world conflicts interfered with or affected the Olympics?