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# The Epic Soccer Showdown



In the bustling halls of Blake Middle School, excitement buzzed like a swarm of bees. The annual soccer championship was upon us, and the whole school was abuzz with anticipation. Our team—the Blake Mustangs—had trained hard, and we were ready to take on our rivals, the Oakridge Stampede. The sun blazed down on the soccer field, turning the grass into a golden carpet. Our team huddled up, nerves and adrenaline mixing in our veins. Coach Rodriguez paced in front of us, his whistle dangling from his neck like a talisman.

“Listen up, team!” Coach boomed. “This is it—the big game. Remember our motto: ‘Kick with heart, play smart!’” We nodded, fists bumping in solidarity. Our star striker, Alex, adjusted his shin guards, determination etched on his face. He was like a cheetah on the field—fast, agile, and hungry for victory. The Stampede strutted onto the opposite side, their captain, Emma, leading the way. She had fiery red hair and a fierce glare. Rumor had it she could juggle a soccer ball while reciting the periodic table. Impressive, but we weren’t intimidated. The referee blew the whistle, and the game began. The ball zipped across the field, feet kicking up divots. Our midfielder, Maya, dribbled past two defenders, her ponytail flying like a victory flag. She passed to Alex, who weaved through the Stampede’s defense like a ninja. “Go, Alex!” we chanted from the sidelines. But Emma wasn’t one to be outdone. She intercepted the ball, her owl-like reflexes surprising us all. The crowd held its breath as she sprinted toward our goal. Our goalie, Jake, stood firm. He was the Great Wall of Blake, and he’d been practicing penalty saves all week. Emma shot—a rocket aimed at the top corner. But Jake leaped, fingertips grazing the ball. It ricocheted off the crossbar, and we erupted in cheers. Back and forth it went—Maya’s fancy footwork, Alex’s lightning strikes, and Emma’s textbook passes. The score remained tied, and the sun dipped lower, casting long shadows. We were in sudden death overtime. Then, fate intervened. Our defender, Liam, spotted an opening. He charged down the field, legs pumping like pistons. The Stampede’s defense scrambled, but Liam was unstoppable. He launched a shot—a howler that curved like a boomerang. **GOAL!** The ball nestled into the net, and the crowd erupted. We swarmed Liam, cheering and hugging. The Stampede looked crestfallen, but Emma offered a sportsmanlike handshake. “Great game,” she said, her competitive fire still burning. As the sun dipped below the horizon, we hoisted the championship trophy. Our principal, Mr. Garcia, beamed. “Blake Mustangs,” he announced, “you’ve made our school proud!” That’s how our school soccer match became a legend. We learned that teamwork, heart, and a killer boomerang shot could conquer any opponent—even the clever Stampede. So next time you see a soccer ball, remember the Blake Mustangs and their epic showdown.

1. *Read the reading passage thoroughly.*
2. *Underline any word or sentence you don’t understand.*

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Answer according to the reading passage:

**1. Who were the rivals in the soccer game?**

- a. Blake Mustangs
- b. Oakridge Stampeders
- c. Blake Stampeders

**2. What motto did the coach remind them of?**

- a. Kick with heart, play smart.
- b. Play your best, play fair.
- c. Winning isn't everything, play smart, have fun.

**3. What was the goalie Jake referred to as?**

- a. the stopper Jake
- b. the stopper Blake
- c. the great wall of Blake

**4. What was the overtime called?**

- a. tie breaker overtime
- b. sudden death
- c. 30 minute overtime

**5. Who was the coach?**

- a. Rodriguez
- b. Garcia
- c. Alex

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# The Epic Soccer Showdown

## Open Response Questions

Open response questions for thinking skills:

1. Inferring
  2. Making Connections
  3. Summarizing
  4. Visualizing
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1. Reflect on the importance of teamwork in both the forest soccer match and the school soccer game. How did collaboration contribute to success?
  2. Discuss the role of coaches in motivating and guiding young athletes. How did Coach Rodriguez and Mr. Garcia contribute to their teams' achievements?
  3. Compare and contrast Diwali with another festival celebrated in your culture or country. What similarities and differences do you notice?
  4. Imagine a rematch between the two school soccer teams. How might the dynamics change, and what unexpected twists could occur?
- Evaluate the impact of victory and defeat on the characters. How did winning or losing shape their future actions and attitudes?
  - Could this reading passage be fiction or non fiction? Explain.
  - Imagine you were on the defeated team, how would you feel? What could you do to prepare for the next year's games?
  - Describe the turning point in the Blake Mustang's soccer journey. How do you think it impacted the team's confidence and performance?