

How soccer helped me

[Sport & Tourism](#), [Football](#)



Many things have helped to shape my identity to make me the person I am. The most influential thing that has shaped me is my culture. One of the biggest pieces of my culture that has done this is my participation in sports. Out of the sports I play, high school soccer has shaped me the most. Soccer in high school shaped my identity by making me more social, a leader, and open minded about diversity. Soccer has guided me in many ways to become the person I am. Especially in high school, the sport has showed me how to be much more cooperative and open with others. Before high school, I isolated myself from others and had only a few close friends. Rather than being a sociable, I acted as though I was the only person in the world and had the outlook that as long as I do what is right individually, there is no need for me to work with others. This outlook changed when I joined the soccer team at Holy Spirit, my high school. With the way soccer is at the high school level, I had no choice but to cooperate and associate myself with others. Once on the field, instead of introducing myself as "me" I had to introduce myself as a part of the team. You win as a team and you lose as a team. Sometimes I wanted to drive to games myself, and I was not allowed to because we are supposed to travel together and it would be wrong to the team for me to separate myself from the group. After I took a more active part in society in high school, I noticed that I had become more of a leader than I was before. Rather than just going with the way other people were, and trying to blend in, I did my own thing and tried to add my own piece to the groups in school. Soccer gave me this new confidence. In soccer, even if you aren't the captain, you still must have some kind of leadership ability. It is best for the team if you do your best to help lead teammates on and off

the field in every situation possible. I believe that I took this idea and brought it into everyday life rather than just with my team. A study done by Robert P. Dobosz and Lee A. Beaty, both of the Counselor Education Program at Northeastern Illinois University, "The relationship between athletic participation and high school students' leadership ability", shows that this is true with many student athletes. In the article, they tried to show the connection between high school students' participation in sports and leadership skills. They stated "In a sample of 60 suburban high school students, athletes demonstrated significantly greater leadership ability than did non-athletes (according to their mean scores on the Leadership Ability Evaluation)." Not only has soccer helped me to become more of an active leader in society, but it has also helped me become more open minded about diversity. Before I started playing soccer in high school, I grew up with mostly white middle class people. When I went to high school however, there were many more different races. Soccer made it much easier to get to know and get comfortable with these minority students. Because it is such an interracial sport, there were just as many people of other races as there were whites. Many of the players were African American and Spanish. Being forced to be on a team with them made me learn to cooperate with them and I ended up being good friends with most of them. I met two of my good friends Vic and Promise, both African Americans, through soccer and it might not have ever happened had I not been apart of the team. I am not the only person who made friends from different races through soccer. In the article "School sports is a safety net for youths: Less active youngsters often have problems trying to cope with life", Richard Lapchick says "As overt acts of

racism and the number of school-based hate groups climb, the survey shows team sports create bonds that cut across racial lines; 76 percent of all white and African American student-athletes say they became friends with someone from another racial or ethnic group while playing sports."