

Narrative essay: my first rugby match

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Winning definitely isn't everything, and I know this from experience. After months of training in the dark in all conditions, our first match day had arrived.

This was to be the first match any of us had ever played in before, in the first ever girls' rugby team at my school, and the pressure was on. Our friends were counting on us to put in a great performance and do the school proud, and I'd never seen our coach looking so nervous. She had played at international level herself, but she was pale, sweaty, and biting her nails – clear signs of feeling the pressure. No one spoke as we clambered onto the bus. I was worried I would be sick if I opened my mouth, so I stared uneasily out the window all the way there. It was better to avoid eye contact with my teammates at that point anyway, because I don't think any of us knew what to say.

As we pulled into the gates, a sense of dread spread throughout my body, but it was joined by a new sensation: excitement. This was going to be fun, and I was going to try and enjoy every minute. Smiling weakly but as encouragingly as possible at my friends, we somewhat shakily stepped off the bus, grabbed our bags and headed off to change. When we were all nearly ready, one player had a panic and ran around like a (hysterical) headless chicken because she had forgotten her socks, but luckily the coach arrived to save the day, announcing that she had brought spares of everything because she knew how forgetful some of us could be at times. Warming up with everyone watching us was an experience. My hands became all clammy from nerves, and I kept dropping the ball, which made me more nervous, and my hands sweatier.

It was like this horrendous infinite cycle that could just go on forever. Luckily it didn't, as kick-off time was nearly upon us. We gathered for a last minute team talk with our rather ashen-faced captain, before the coin toss, which we lost. I watched the ball shoot up into the air, and realising it was coming in my direction, got under it, arms outstretched, and shaking slightly. The last thing I remember of the game was feeling a weight hit my legs, before smashing my head on the ground. I was concussed, and had to sit out of the rest of the match.

I don't remember the match but we lost, by a big margin, and I was dazed and confused and teammates had sprained ankles and bloody noses, but it was the greatest day of our lives. We didn't win, but it didn't matter.