

Soccer Sami[★] and the Big Meanie Coach

by
stOoART



Sami
loved
soccer.



She loved it a lot.
She didn't run fast or have a great shot.



Her shoe would fly off
when she kicked a big pass.





And sometimes
she simply got tripped
by the grass.



But Sami loved soccer.
She dreamed
of the day
she could
move it like Mia
and score like Pele.



It wasn't too long before Sam joined a team.
Her friends were all there
but the coach seemed quite mean.
Why he was coaching was anyone's guess.
He didn't like kids.
He liked Sam even less.



He DID like to yell. He did that quite well.
Who he was yelling at no one could tell.

He'd stomp back and forth
and his face would turn **RED**
and it looked like his eyes
would **POP** out of his head.

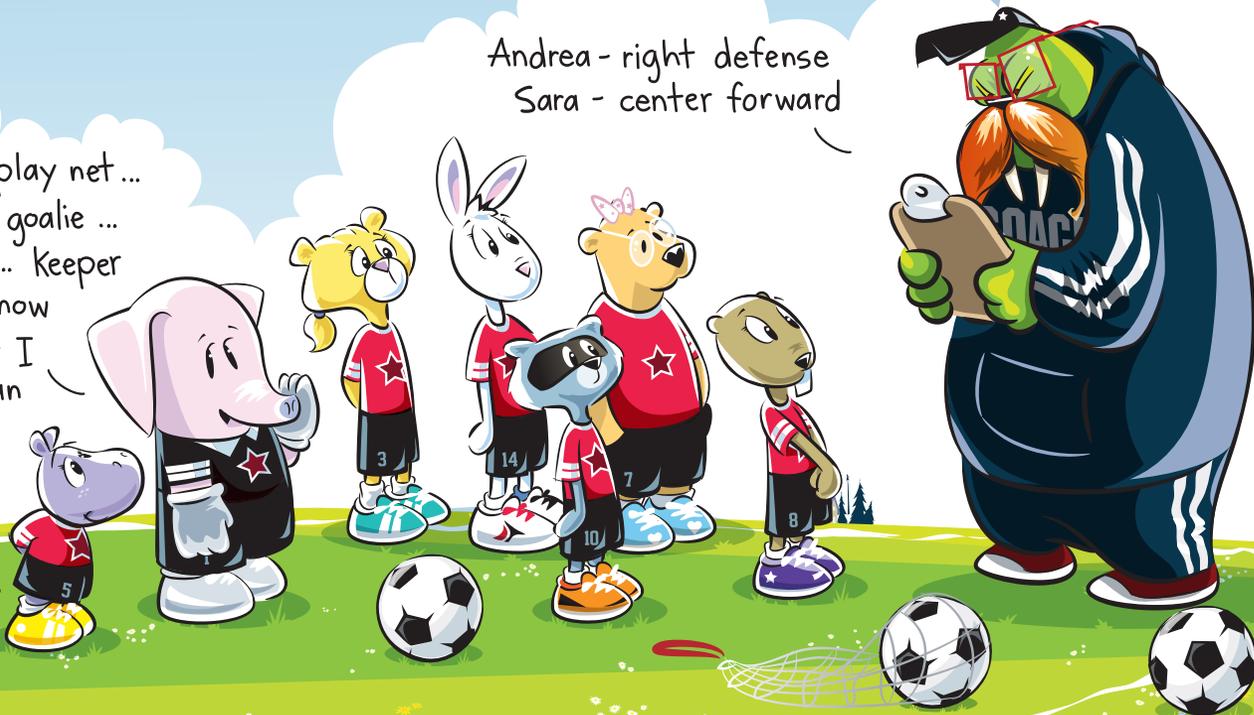
At first Sami thought this
kind of amusing
but she soon
found out
the coach
did not
like
losing.



He'd play only those girls
who could win him some games.
Sam never once heard him call out her name.

I get to play net ...
I mean goalie ...
er, huh, ... Keeper
... you know
what I
mean

Andrea - right defense
Sara - center forward

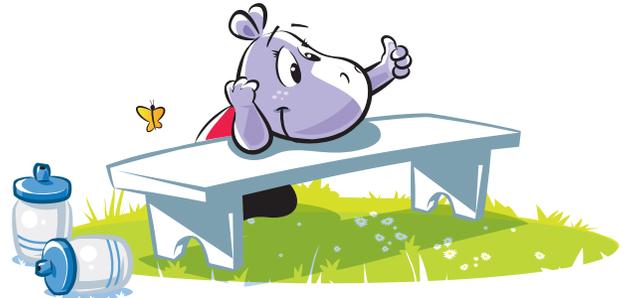


Sam said she was eager but the coach didn't care.
He'd point to the bench, "Be eager over there!"

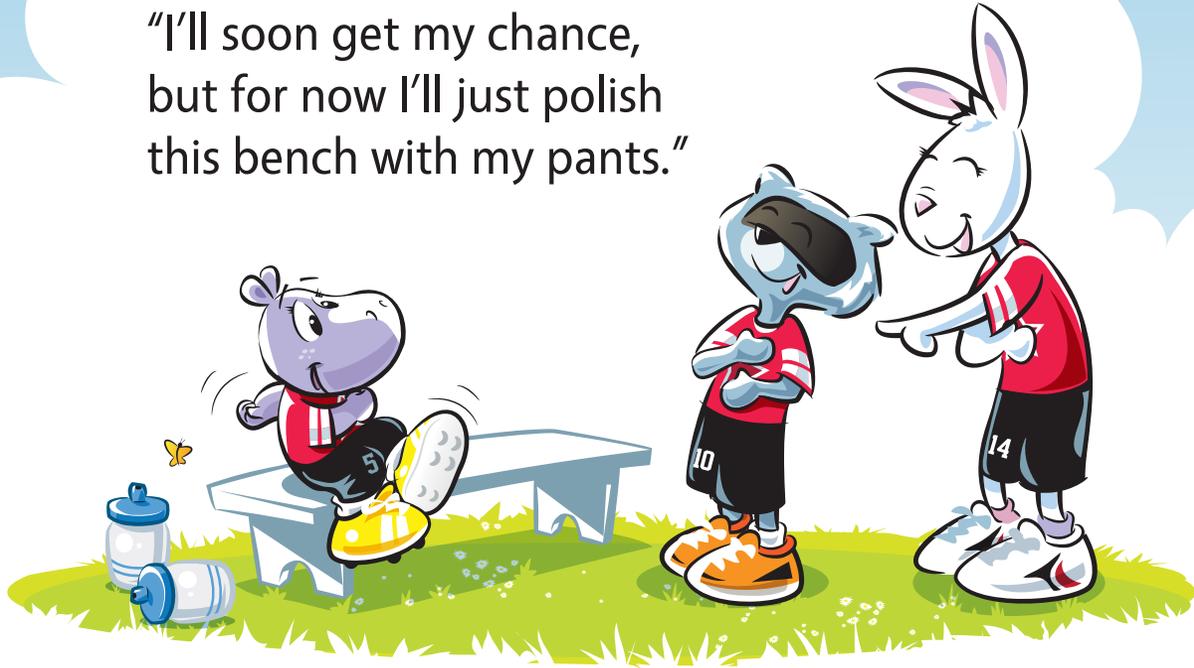




So alone on the bench
Sam would cheer on her friends,
from the start of each game,
right through to the end.



Sami would joke
"I'll soon get my chance,
but for now I'll just polish
this bench with my pants."





They'd all start to laugh,
and all get to giggling,
and all polish the bench
with a little bum wiggling.



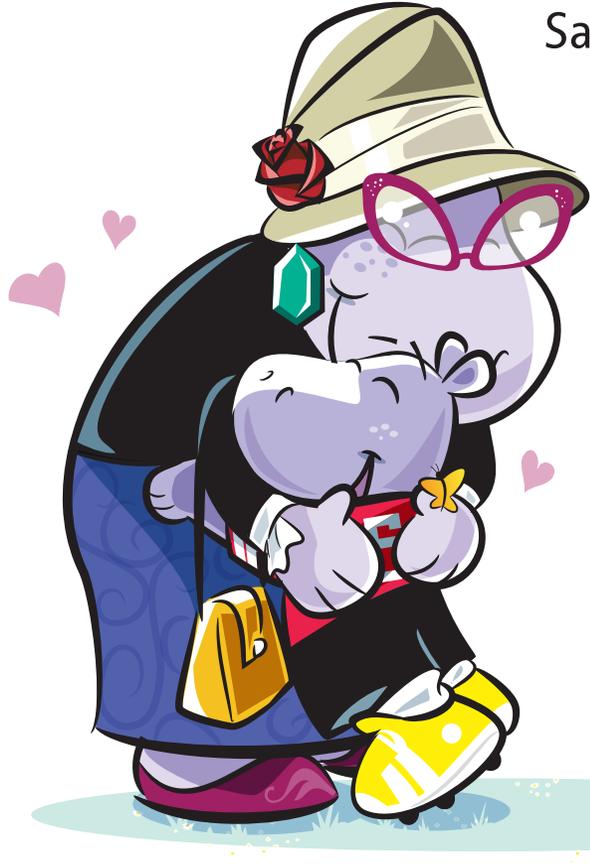
But the coach would storm over all grumbly and glum

**"THIS IS LITTLE LEAGUE SOCCER!
THIS IS NO PLACE FOR FUN!!"**



And so it went on with more of the same,
alone would sit Sam, game after game.



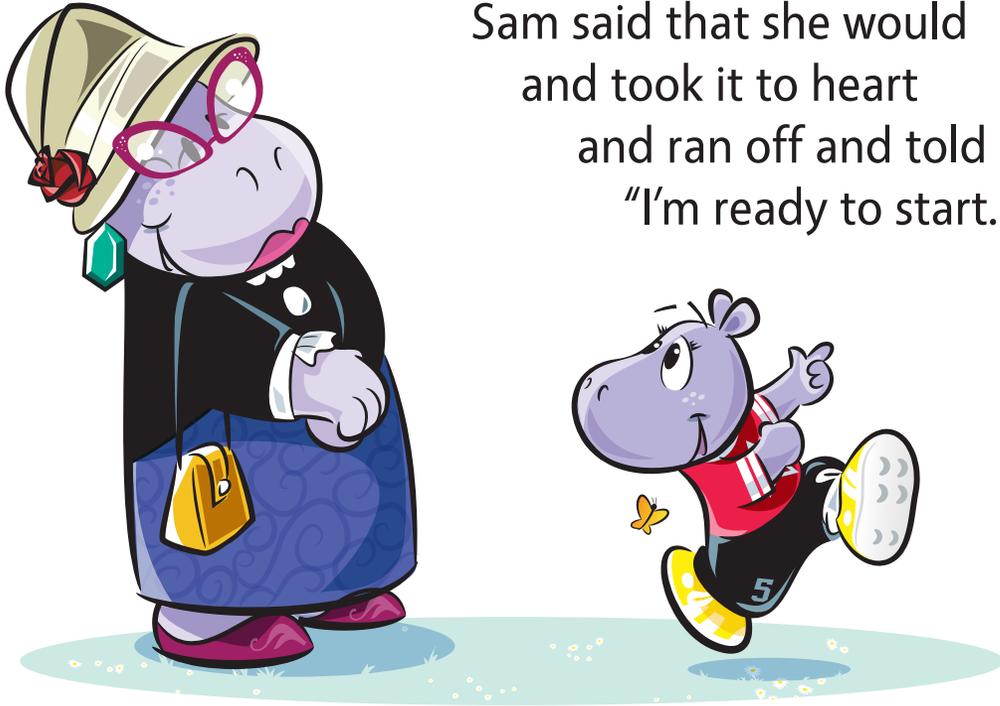


Sam was especially excited one day.
Her grandma had come
to watch Sami play.

“I’ve practised” said Sam,
“every chance that I could.
I’m better, I think...
I may even be good.”

Grandma smiled back, "I'm always impressed.
Just remember my dear, to give it your best."

Sam said that she would
and took it to heart
and ran off and told coach,
"I'm ready to start."



But Sam didn't start, I'm sorry to say.
That big meanie coach never let Sami play.



“I’m so sorry, Nan.
You’ve come all this way
but the coach
couldn’t find
me a spot
for today.”
She tried
to go on
and
tried
to explain



as the tears on her cheeks
mixed in with the rain.
Grandma hugged Sam
and said,
“Listen my dear”
as she took out
a tissue
to dry
up
her
tears

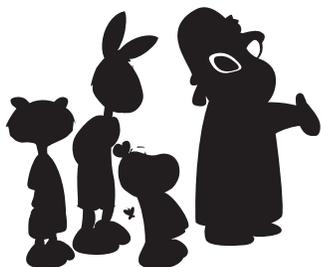
“Sometimes there are those who simply can’t see the fun that life brings to you and to me.

“Your coach is like that.

He’s as blind as a bat.

Perhaps his glasses are the reason for that.

“But deep down inside is where his trouble starts, for what little he sees does not reach his heart.”



“So we must stay strong
despite how it seems,
and keep keeping on
and follow our dreams.”



Then she gave Sam a hug
and a kiss on the cheek
“Remember, my dear,
there’s always
next week.”

When next week came, it was East versus West.

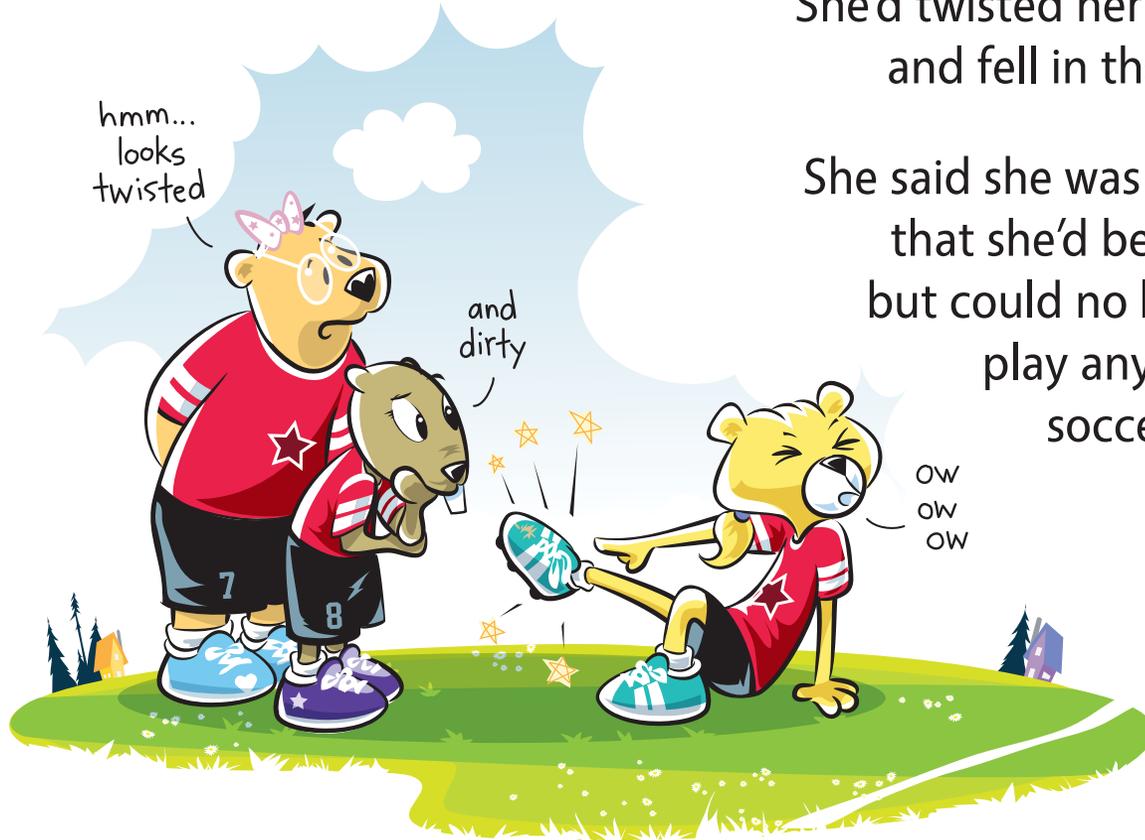
The last game of the year, to see who was best.



The game started off
at a furious pace,
with Sam on the bench
in her usual place.



But just past the half, Sam's teammate got hurt.
She'd twisted her ankle
and fell in the dirt.



She said she was good,
that she'd be okay,
but could no longer
play any more
soccer that
day.

The coach boiled up,
“This is most irritating!”
and stared
down the bench
to where Sami
sat waiting.



"YOU'LL HAVE TO GO IN!"

he snapped with a growl,
sneering at Sam, his face in a scowl.

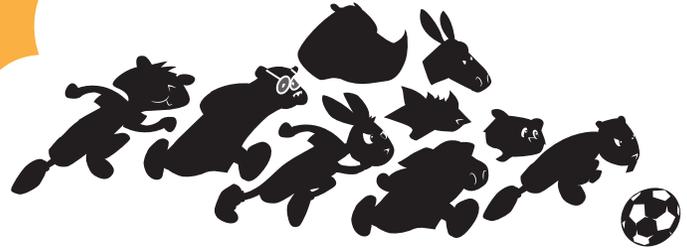


Sam sprang on the field.
Her big chance at last.
Then, as before,
she got tripped by the grass.

Did that bother Sam?
No, not at all.
She picked herself up
and went after the ball.



But Sam couldn't quite keep up with the pack.
She trailed behind, way off in the back.



As the two teams pummeled away at the ball, it suddenly burst loose away from them all.



All the way back to Sami it sped,
who had been so far behind she was now out ahead.





She took it and ran as fast as she could.
They'd catch up with her soon.
She knew they were good.



She looked to her left
and looked to her right
and to her surprise,
there was
no one
in sight.

But her teammates were there, just a little behind.
Locked arm in arm and forming a line.
Running downfield. Creating a wall.
Keeping the other team away from the ball.



With seconds to go
TICK-TOCK TOCK-TICK

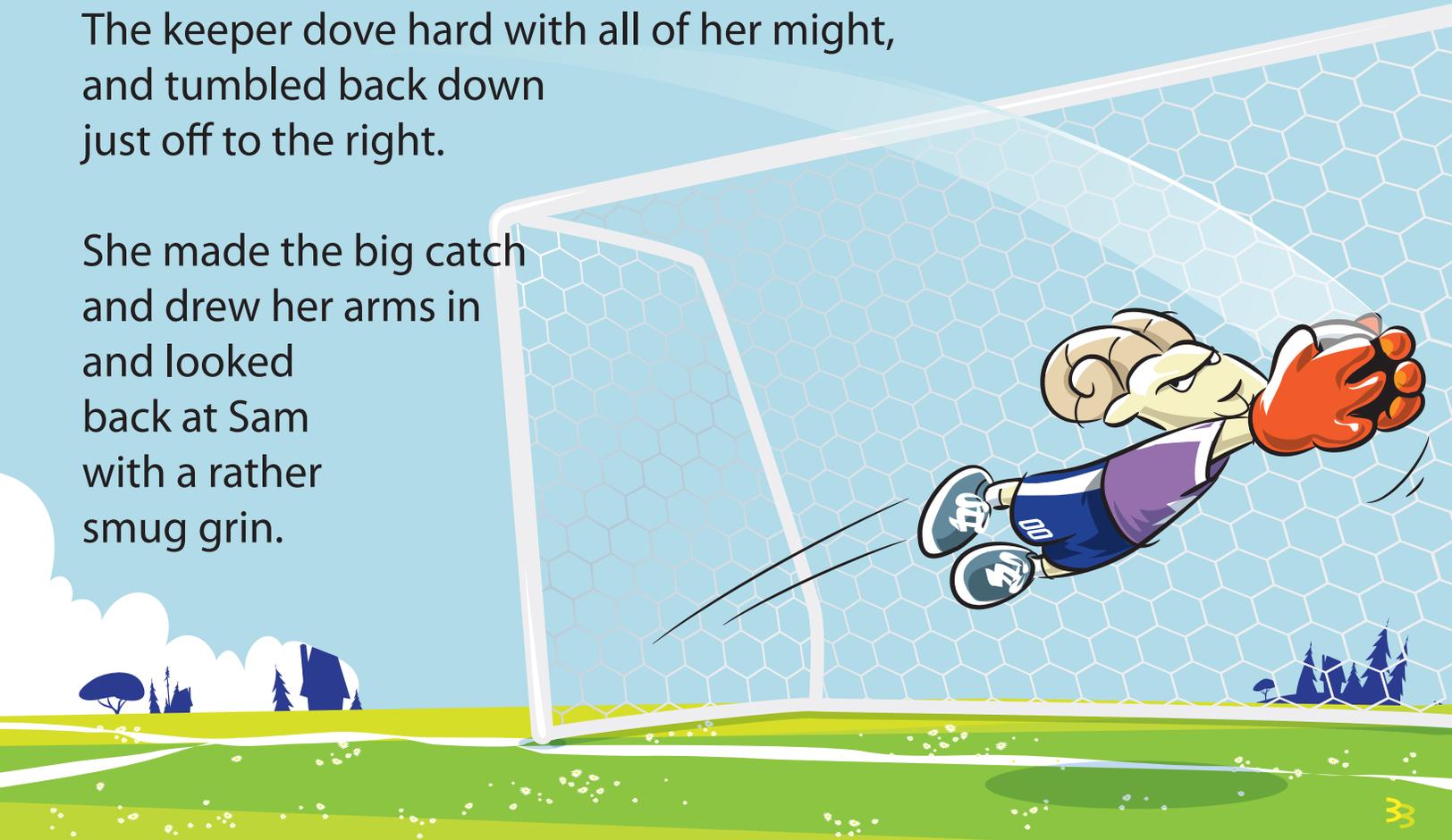
Sami wound up
for a mighty
big kick.

All held their breath
and everyone stared
as shoes, dirt and grass,
flew through
the air.



The keeper dove hard with all of her might,
and tumbled back down
just off to the right.

She made the big catch
and drew her arms in
and looked
back at Sam
with a rather
smug grin.



But Sam, not possessing a kick very strong,
was too busy watching her shot roll along.

Everyone watched
as the ball took its time,
and slowed to a stop
just over the line.

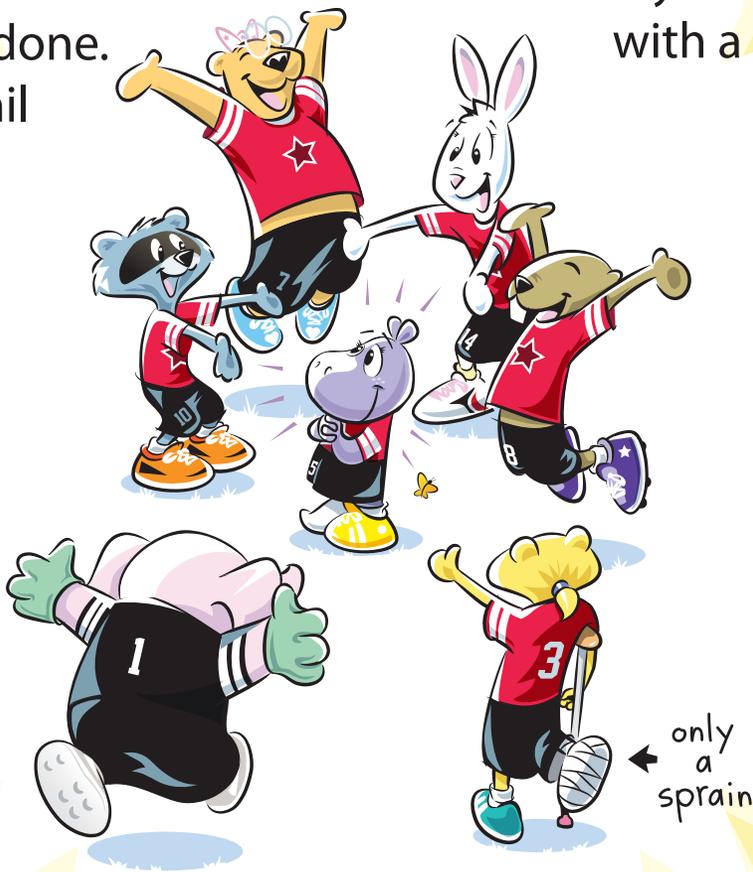


The keeper looked stunned and said “What did I do?”
and saw in her gloves that she’d saved Sami’s shoe.



Then three whistles blew.
The game was all done.
The other team - nil
Sami's team - one.

They rushed around Sam
with a great wild cheer.
Sami's big kick
won
the game
of the year.



After getting their medals the girls came around.
They'd saved up some money for a small gift they had found.

Sam offered their gift to the puzzled old man,
wrapped in a bow with a card made by hand.



The Coach studied the gift then opened the note, and holding it close he read what they wrote.



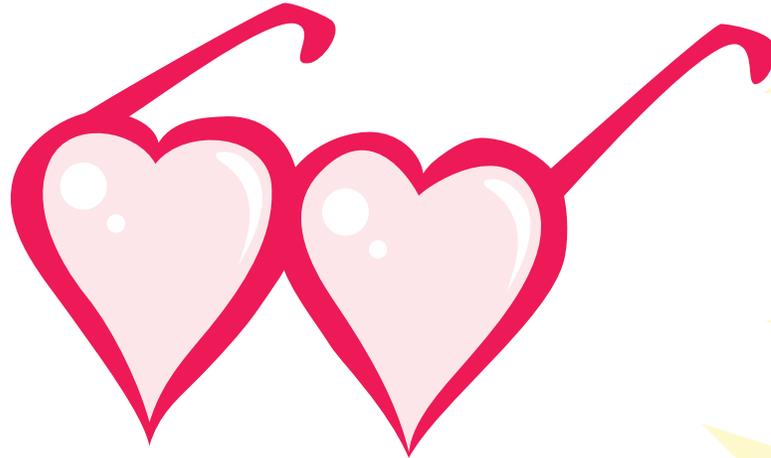
Thank you Coach
for a wonderful season.
We have learned much
and you are
the reason.

Sara Sami
Emma Karen
Andrea Mia Olivia

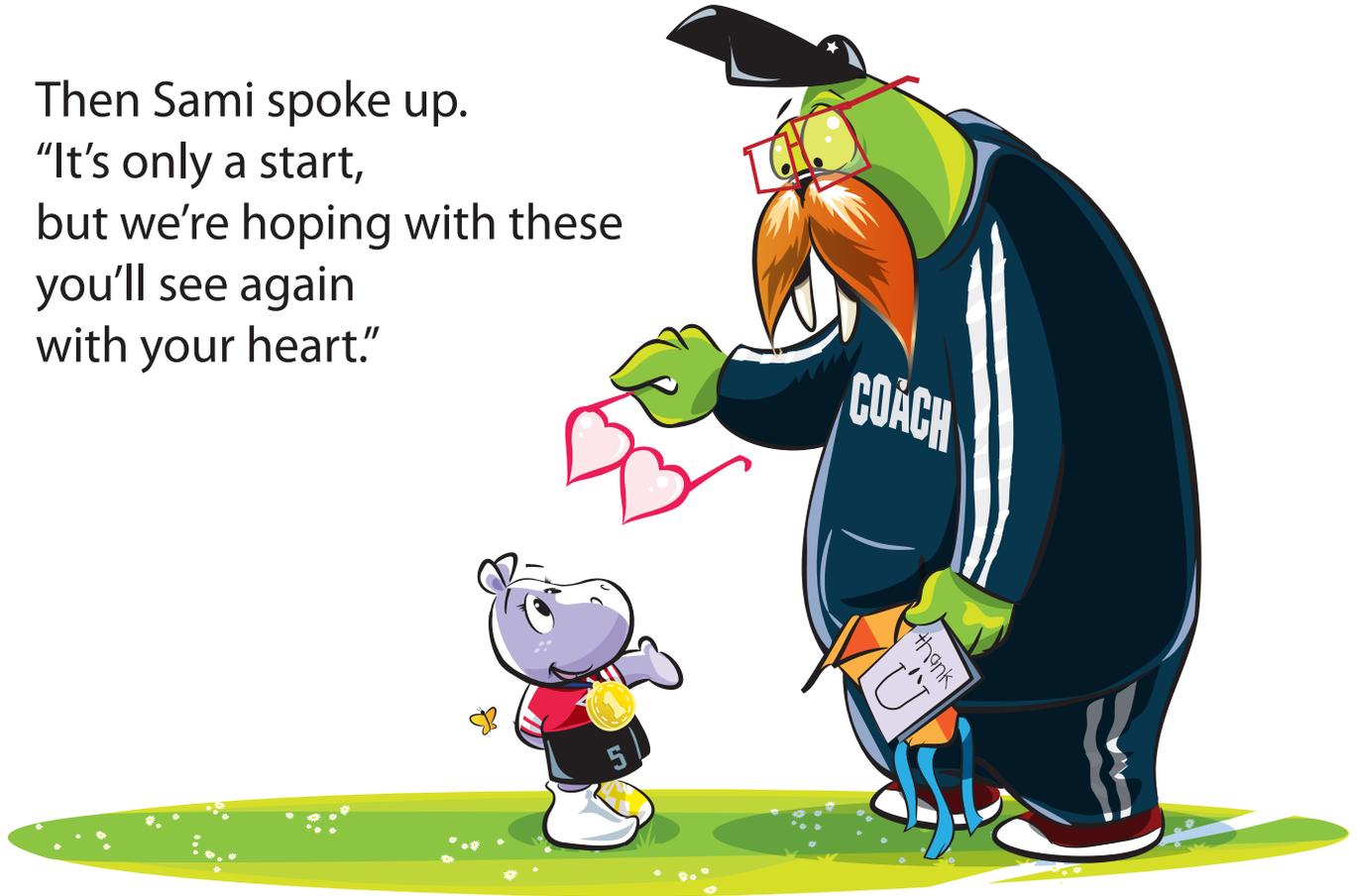


Then he undid the bow and fumbled about and reaching inside ...

Pulled new glasses out.



Then Sami spoke up.
“It’s only a start,
but we’re hoping with these
you’ll see again
with your heart.”

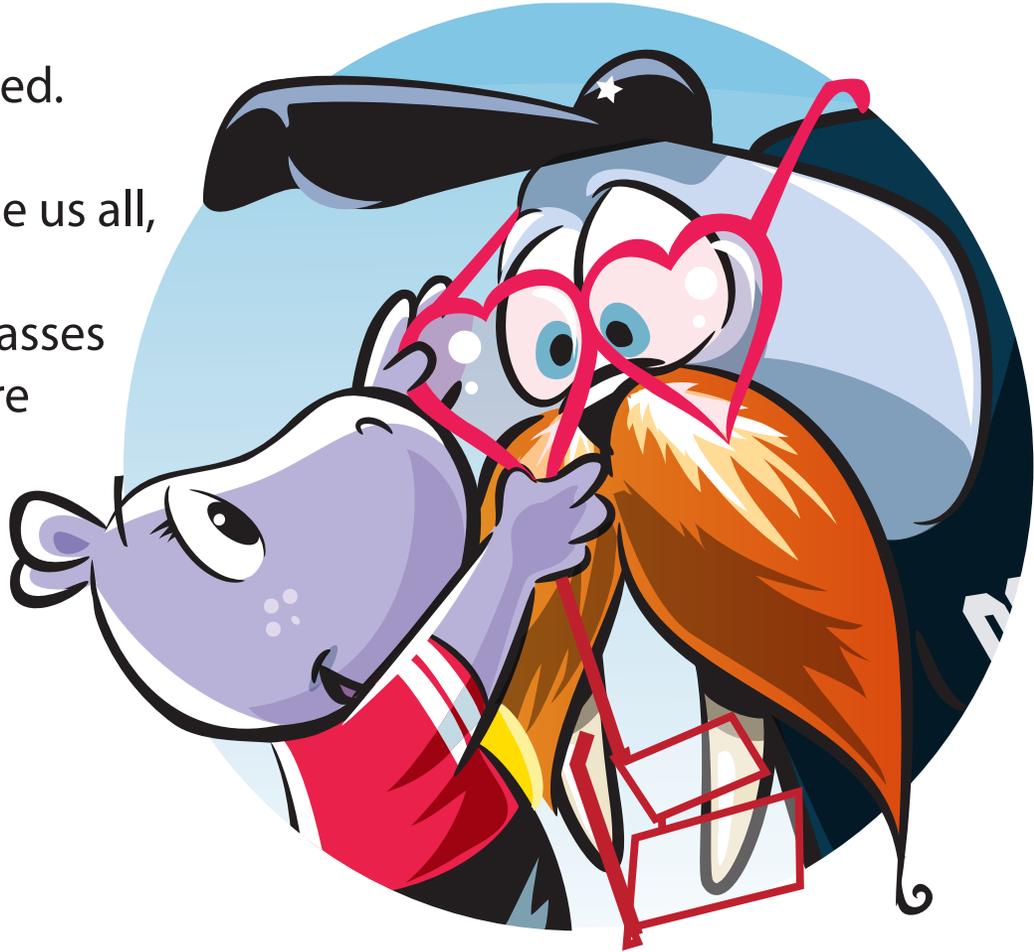


The coach stood
a long moment.
Then he felt a small tear,
and a smile
wrinkled
his face
for the
first
time
in
years



“Girls, could you ever
forgive an old fool
for being so blind,
for being so
cruel?”

Sami nodded.
"Of course.
But promise us all,
you'll wear
the new glasses
when you're
coaching
softball."



They all broke out laughing, their heads full of glory.
As for the softball team... well, that's another story.





stOoART is a commercial artist and author, who loves his family, a good joke, a sunny day, cheeseburgers, hockey and the Beatles.

He is the proud father of a beautiful daughter and a handsome son. Although both are now young adults, they grew up in North Vancouver, Canada and loved playing soccer, baseball and basketball. Through the years, he was involved as a parent helper or coach who always believed in everyone having fun.

“Soccer Sami and the Big Meanie Coach” is a story for all those Samis who just want to play the game, win or lose.