



THIRD PLACE RECIPIENT

The Fair Play

Anthony Chavez

SAN JUAN HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

While playing soccer for my club team SURF, we competed in a final for an important tournament. It had been an intense game for the last seventy minutes and in the second half of the game we were both tied. There was only around ten minutes left in the game. I had made a break for a goal. As I neared the other team's penalty area I started to get nervous hearing a defender approaching me from behind. As I got closer to the goal, I tripped on the ball. The referee marked a penalty with only a few minutes left. I knew that the penalty was marked incorrectly. My coach, teammates, and spectators told me to take the penalty saying that it was part of the game and that the referee had already made the decision. But I knew deep down that it wasn't a foul. I knew that the defender hadn't touched me and I just fell over the ball. I faced a difficult choice during that time. Should I take the penalty to have an opportunity to score a goal or should I advocate for fair play by telling the referee he had made a mistake?

I decided that it was better to uphold the principles of honesty and fairness that my parents had taught me. I remembered all the times my team had put in their best effort during and outside of practice in order to be the best they could. I didn't want to throw all that away by taking an unfair call. I stopped the play and told the referee what had happened. If we were gonna win the game, I wanted it to be because of hard work and dedication, not just a bad call from the referee. The referee canceled the penalty because of the information I had just given him. While I didn't take the penalty kick, both teams and the spectators noticed the gesture of honesty.

As the game continued, my team worked hard and ended up winning in penalty kicks. After the game, everyone told me that I did the right thing by not taking the free penalty. On the way back home my parents congratulated me for winning the game fair and with dedication.

That day I walked with my head up knowing that my team had given their best to win the tournament. This experience taught me that it's better to win fair instead of cheating your way to the win. This is a lesson that has stayed with me throughout my life reminding me that true victory comes from playing with honesty and respect.