



GLOBAL GOAL SCORING

1 Dear Mum,

Can you believe that it's only been three weeks since you last saw me? Time has flown by so fast over here in Europe, and I've got the most unbelievable news to tell you! But, I'll save that for the end, because there's so much to fill you in on.

2 Our team arrived at Heathrow Airport, London, around nine in the morning. It was really weird

to see that it was still dark and chilly at that time — English winters are a lot harsher than they are at home. We didn't have to wait too long for our connecting flight. Most of us just camped out in the departure lounge and read comics. By eleven we were on a plane heading to Manchester. It only took an hour to fly from one side of the country to the other!

3 Manchester looked like a pretty amazing city from the air, but we didn't get much chance to explore

it once we were on the ground. After checking into our hotel (they've got mini-bars!), we all just jumped into bed and slept until the next morning. We only had a day to relax in Manchester before the Junior Tournament started, so we didn't get to see very much. I loved visiting Old Trafford Ground, which is home to Manchester United. It's the biggest stadium in the UK and fits about 76,000 people. I wish we could've played the championships there!

4 Mum, you would've been so proud of us at the Tournament. Our team went up against Japan in the first draw, and we beat them 2-0. There was one point when it looked like they were going to score a goal against us, but Kieran saved it by making a brilliant dive. Our next match was early the next day, so we couldn't spend too much time celebrating. We were going to play Argentina. They were such a tough team. At the end we finished with a one-all draw, so we had to go into a penalty shoot-out. Guess who got to kick that last ball? Yeah, I thwacked it straight over the head of their goalie, and brought the team into the semi-finals! We faced Germany and narrowly won when I scored the only goal in the game. You realise that I'm not going to let you ever wash these socks of mine? They're too lucky.

5 The finals were absolutely nerve-wracking. Our opponents were Brazil, and they're undoubtedly the best team in the world. Those kids were amazing, the way they played with the ball. Unfortunately they beat us, with a single goal scored just before the full-time buzzer. It was so much fun though, playing against such a brilliant team.

6 Are you ready for some of my good news? Well, after the trophies were handed out, a special announcement was made by the head of the Junior International Football Committee. Talent scouts had been watching the championships, and had made up a list of the twenty-two most talented

young players. I was one of them! Our prize for being selected was to compete in a special match in Marseille, France. There wasn't much time at all to train — the match was held three days later.

7 Marseille was very different to Manchester. It's in the south of France and right on the Mediterranean Sea, so even in winter it's not too cold. The city was also really beautiful, and we had a lot of fun exploring the Old Port, with its lighthouse, as well as some of the history museums. But the best part was checking out their stadium — the Stade Velodrome. This was where we played our Rising Star match. It's the largest football stadium in France, but it's not as big as Old Trafford.

8 I preferred the Junior Tournament to this match. Chris was the only other boy picked from my team, and I missed playing with the rest of my teammates. Plus, just before the start of the game we heard a rumour that the president of FIFA was going to be watching us. Imagine having the person in charge of organising the World Cup watch you play! It created havoc for us, that's for sure. Everyone ran onto the field determined to show that they were the best player in the world. Kids were heading balls all over the place. The game got really chaotic at one point, when some Brazilian and Portuguese players juggled the ball between each other using only their knees.

9 Chris and I kept our heads together and played exactly as Coach Ferla taught us. Too bad we were on different teams. The game ended in a nil-all draw, with no penalty shots given. I would've been chuffed to have scored at least one goal for the FIFA president. But, it was still a lot of fun, and a really cool opportunity.

10 Now, Mum, do you think that news is all amazing? I'm really proud of myself, but there's one more thing I have to tell you.

That night there was a fancy dinner held in honour of all the kids who had competed that day. We ate

traditional food from the area, which had lots of garlic, tomatoes and oil in it. There was a really nice fish soup that you would've loved, but I can't remember the name of it. It started with a 'B'. Anyway, that's not the really fantastic news.

11 At the end of the dinner, the FIFA president gave a speech, thanking everyone for coming and congratulating all of the players. He said that it was really encouraging to see so much talent in the future of the game. To acknowledge this, he organised another special match, called a 'demonstration', which is going to be held in Zurich — the home of FIFA, in Switzerland. He had personally chosen eleven players from the Most Talented Youth match to form a team that would face a team made up of players from the World Cup Hall of Fame!

12 Guess whose name he read out? That's right! I'm writing to you from my hotel room overlooking the River Limmat in Zurich. We're playing the Demonstration Match next week and it's going to be televised all over the world! It doesn't matter if we win or lose, or even if I score a goal in the game.

I'd better get going now, Mum, but please wish me luck. I'm missing you heaps. Give my love to everyone else, and I'll ring you as soon as the game's over to tell you how I went.

Lots of love,

Mark



Questions

- Where was the Junior Tournament held?
 - London
 - Marseille
 - Manchester
- Who stopped a team from scoring?
 - Mark
 - Kieran
 - Chris
- Which country had the 'tough team'?
 - Japan
 - Argentina
 - Brazil



- The traditional food in Marseille had lots of
 - garlic, tomatoes and oil in it.
 - garlic, fish and oil in it.
 - tomatoes, garlic and fish in it.
- Which landmark was not mentioned in Mark's letter?
 - River Limmat
 - Stade Velodrome
 - the City of Manchester Stadium
- Why would Mark say that 'it doesn't matter if we win or lose' at the end of his letter?
 - He's just so proud to have come this far.
 - He's very tired and misses his home, so he doesn't care anymore.
 - He just wants to play the game seriously, even if he loses.

Vocabulary

Find words in the text that match the meanings below. The word is in the section shown in brackets.

- A place where aircraft land (2)
- The people you are playing against (5)
- Awards given to the competitors (6)
- A large arena used to play sport (7)
- A talk performed to an audience (11)

Grammar

A **preposition** is a word situated before a noun to show when or where something happened. E.g. **on** the mat, **over** the fence, **before** the party.

Find a preposition in these sentences.

- Manchester looked like an amazing city from the air.
- It's undoubtedly the best city in the world.
- We slept until the next morning.
- We heard a rumour just before the game.

Back To The Text...

- Mark's team had its biggest win against
 - Japan.
 - Germany.
- What would be a good sub-heading for section 7?
 - The Big Final
 - Off to France

- The purpose of this text is
 - to recount.
 - to inform.

Sequencing

Look back through the card to find what happened first. Choose **a** or **b**.

- They read comics.
 - They discovered the mini bars.
- Mark scored against Germany.
 - Mark scored against Argentina.

- They flew to Marseille.
 - They flew to Zurich.

Think About This

- Mark's position is likely to be
 - goal keeper.
 - fullback.
 - striker.
- Why did Mark prefer the tournament in Manchester?
 - It was a much prettier city.
 - The stadium was smaller.
 - He was playing with friends.

Challenge Option

Research: Make a list of every country that has hosted the FIFA World Cup.

