

4. Out of Sync

Practices continued as planned on Tuesday and Thursday nights until the week before the opening game. That week, Coach Rezendes had to alter the practice schedule to meet with the rest of the coaches in the league and pick up the team's uniforms.

Unfortunately, this was not acceptable to Robbie and he and his mother got into a big fight about the cancelled Tuesday practice.

"Come on, Mom!" yelled Robbie from the front door. "We're going to be late for practice."

"Robbie, I already explained to you that there is no practice tonight. Coach Rezendes changed it to Wednesday," said his mother.

"It's Tuesday. Tuesdays and Thursdays are practice nights. Saturday is game day!" Robbie yelled back. "Now, let's go!"

"Robbie, there is no practice tonight," his mother replied. "It's tomorrow night. Now let's drop this."

"It's Tuesday!" screamed Robbie. "And on Tuesday we have soccer practice!"

As Mrs. Stanley tried to ignore her son, Robbie continued on his tirade.

"Mr. Rezendes told us that every Tuesday and every Thursday we would have practice and Saturday was game day. For the past four weeks we have gone to the park on Tuesday and Thursday for practice. We need to practice for our games. Today is Tuesday and we have practice," Robbie preached to an unresponsive audience.

When he got no response from his mother, Robbie went running into his bedroom with one thing on his mind.

“Where is it?” he thought to himself. “I know that the schedule says Tuesday and Thursday and today is Tuesday, so we have practice. Ha, there it is,” said Robbie as he grabbed the soccer schedule coach Rezendes had given to him on the first day of practice. He ripped the calendar off his wall and went storming back to his mother.

“Look, today is Tuesday,” he said anxiously pointing to the calendar. “And here is the schedule the coach gave us—it says, *Practice: Tuesday and Thursday*. Now let’s go. I don’t want to be late!”

“Robbie, for the last time, there is no practice today. It’s been changed to tomorrow!” said Mrs. Stanley sternly. “Now I don’t want to hear another thing about soccer practice. I’m trying to get dinner ready.”

“You’re wrong, Mom, today is Tuesday and we practice on Tuesdays!” said Robbie adamantly, screaming at his mother.

For the next thirty minutes, Robbie continued to yell and harass his mother about his soccer practice—so much that Mrs. Stanley finally couldn’t take it any more. She shut off the stove, put the food in the refrigerator, grabbed her keys, and off to the soccer field the two went.

Upon arriving at the sports ground, Robbie quickly jumped out of the car and ran onto the soccer field. No one was there.

“Are you happy now?” snapped his frustrated mother, walking behind him.

“No, why would I be happy?” said Robbie. “No one is here.”

“Exactly,” replied his mother, “because Coach Rezendes cancelled the practice until tomorrow. Now get back into the car so we can go home and I can finish getting dinner ready before your father gets home.”

“What time is it?” asked Robbie.

“It’s 5:40,” said his mother.

“Practice starts at 5 o’clock and usually lasts for an hour,” Robbie stated out loud. “I guess no one is coming to practice tonight.”

“No, everyone is coming tomorrow night,” his mother said.

As if Mrs. Stanley hadn’t been through enough the night before with Robbie and the changed practice schedule, things were no better on Wednesday night.

Following practice, the coach handed out the team’s uniforms. “Sorry about having to cancel last night’s practice,” he said. “I had to attend a mandatory coaches’ meeting. But I did get our game schedule for the year and our uniforms.”

With the announcement that the team was going to get their uniforms, the kids let out a loud cheer. Robbie, on the other hand, not only didn’t cheer, but began to shudder with the loud outburst and covered his ears with his hands.

When the applause died down, Robbie sternly addressed Coach Rezendes.

“At the beginning of the year, you told us that practices were going to be on Tuesdays and Thursdays,” said Robbie. “And you weren’t here last night!”

“Yes, Robbie, I did and I apologize,” said the coach. “But as I mentioned, I had to go to a meeting so I couldn’t be here last night. That’s why we are having a practice tonight.”

“So you lied to us then?” asked Robbie.

“No, not really, Robbie. Sometimes things happen where you need to adjust your schedule. That’s part of life,” answered the coach.

“You said that practices were going to be held on Tuesday and Thursday nights, so you lied to us when we didn’t have practice last night,” continued Robbie adamantly.

“Robbie,” interrupted his mother, “that’s enough. We’ll talk about this at home!”

When Robbie was done with his tirade, and as they left the practice field, Coach Rezendes handed each child a bag. Each bag had a game schedule stapled to the outside of it with their name written across the top. Inside the bag was the coveted uniform.

“Parents, uniforms were ordered to the sizes you provided us during the first week of practice,” said the coach. “Please have your child try it on tonight and if it doesn’t fit, let me know at tomorrow night’s practice. Thank you and have a good night.”

As Robbie left the field with his bag held tightly in his hands, he yelled back to Coach Rezendes, “See you Thursday night for practice, Coach!”

The coach just smile and waved.

Before Mrs. Stanley could get her car out of the parking lot, Robbie carefully tore open the bag so as not to ruin his game schedule, pulled out his new uniform, and let out a scream that could have shattered a mirror.

“Ughhhhh!”

“Robbie, what is the matter?” said his mother, as she drove across the parking lot.

“Coach Rezendes gave me the wrong uniform!” he yelled.

“Whatever do you mean?” replied his mother.

“This uniform is red with white lettering,” complained Robbie. “I hate red. I won’t wear red!”

“Robbie, you can’t always have things your way,” replied his mother. “Red is the color of your team, like it or not.”

“I’d prefer not,” Robbie replied. He sat with his arms folded, saying nothing all the way home except for an occasional grunt.

Later that evening when his father got home from work and had been filled in on the uniform situation, the two discussed the circumstances at hand. Although Robbie was not thrilled about the color of his new uniform, he decided to wear it in order to play soccer.

“I’d much rather have a green uniform,” he said to his father, “preferably one with a black dragon on it.”

“You can’t always get what you want, son,” said Mr. Stanley. “Sometimes you have to make sacrifices.”

“I know, but I’d rather not,” Robbie said as he slipped the red uniform over his head. “Look at it! Red is such a stupid color. Green is so much better. I’d rather be wearing green instead. The Greensboro Dragons wear Green!”

“Unfortunately, your team is red and if you want to play soccer, you have to wear the red uniform. That’s all there is to it,” said Mr. Stanley.

“Just look at it!” said Robbie in disgust. “Look how boring it looks. It has no power to it. It’s just a plain red shirt—whoopee!”

“Well, if you’d like, I can bring it back to Coach Rezendes and tell him that you’d much rather have a green uniform,” said his father sarcastically.

“Yes, please! I would like that!” said Robbie excitedly.

“No, Robbie, that was sarcasm,” said his father. “I will tell the coach that you won’t be playing for him this year because you think red is boring.”

“That’s just not fair,” replied Robbie. “I wanted to play soccer in a green uniform like the Dragons.”

“Get used to it, son. Life is not always fair and you don’t always get what you want,” said Mr. Stanley.

Except for that one week in which the coach had to adjust the schedule, practices continued as usual on Tuesdays and Thursdays leading up to the team’s first game. However, while Robbie was still holding tall to his new hobby, he continued to struggle with the sport. Unlike many of the other kids Robbie, was not very coordinated and was having trouble with the skill drills. If Robbie thought that the running part was hard, it was much more difficult to run and dribble a ball at the same time.

More often than not, Robbie fell over the ball or just plain tripped over his own two feet. Each time he fell, someone would let out a giggle. Upon hearing that, Robbie wanted to cover his ears, but that would only cause him more difficulty in completing the task at hand. Instead, he would continue trying to dribble the ball while doing his breathing exercise and counting to five.