



Home and Away: One Writer's Inspiring Experience at the Homeless World Cup

Dave Bidini

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In 2008, Dave Bidini accompanies Homeless Team Canada to the Homeless World Cup in Melbourne, Australia. As he watches team members play and shares their disappointments, frustrations, joys, and triumphs, he comes to care deeply about the players: 45-year-old Billy, who is a former addict; the quick-footed 24-year-old Moroccan immigrant Juventus, who refuses to talk about his past; and most of all, the endearing teenager Krystal, who carries a photograph of her long-dead mother and dreams of a better life.

Bidini gets to know the other teams at the Homeless World Cup and describes the games themselves, culminating in Canada's final game against Malawi and a chance for the talented Krystal to join a professional team in Holland. Bidini also begins to understand what this tournament means to people. He sees firsthand the power of sport to transform the lives of those on the edge-how the decision to play this game can mean the difference between survival and heading down a road of addiction, poverty, or crime. *Home and Away* offers a powerful look at the poor and dispossessed, from the barrios of Mexico City and the shanties of West Africa, to the streets of North America and Europe, and illuminates the renewed meaning that these homeless players find in the beautiful game.

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