

Soccer Rituals,
Superstitions, and Pranks:
a Study of the Folklore of
the Soccer Culture

By
Jev Forsberg

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.page 1

Introductionpage 2

Analysispage 3

 Ritualpage 4

 Superstitionpage 6

 Prank.page 7

Conclusionpage 8

Collections.page 10

Bibliographypage 46

Soccer Rituals, Superstitions, and Pranks: a study of the folklore of
the soccer culture

By
Jev Forsberg

INTRODUCTION

My name is Jev Forsberg; I have been a resident of Southern Saint Paul, Minnesota for about 6 years. Before that I lived in Edina, Minnesota for 3 years, and before even that I was a resident of South Minneapolis, Minnesota since birth. I am twenty years of age since the day of September 23, 2000. I am of 25% Polish descent, 25% German descent, 25% Swedish descent and lastly 25% Norwegian descent. I have completed nine years of public school in Minnesota and three of private. I graduated in the top 5% of my class and I am now a full-time student and sophomore at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I was an atheist until I became a Protestant Christian at the age of 16. My mother was born and raised in Bowling Green, Ohio. She went to Oberlin College for undergraduate school and to the University of Chicago for graduate degree in English. My father went to Carleton College for undergraduate school, then went to the University of Heidelberg, Germany for two years and then to the University for Chicago for two more years to receive a Masters in Business. People say that I have quite a good sense of humor, although you can in no way tell from the writing. I am friendly and personable, but at the same time I am somewhat of a shy introvert around people I do not know. People say that I have a very high moral character, and at the same time I try to keep non-judgmental. There's nothing that I hate more than a hypocrite.

I am writing this paper on soccer rituals, superstitions and pranks because I have always been interested in the soccer community. I myself am a soccer player, and I also often partook in many of the rituals, superstition and pranks that I will be analyzing later in this paper. Since I am writing this paper from an esoteric perspective, this paper will be biased in some way or another whether it is on a conscious or unconscious level. The simple fact that I played soccer and still have a strong tie to it will give this project a different and somewhat romanticized view of the stereotypical exoteric perspective on soccer rituals, stereotypes, and pranks of "that's kind of weird."

The whole process of collecting was not very problematic. I had a collection partner to help with the finding of a large variant of different rituals, superstitions, and pranks. He is a sophomore and also the backup goalkeeper for the Colorado College soccer team. Also, I had no problem contacting my soccer teammates from high school to find their rituals, superstitions and pranks that they pulled in high school and that they pull now in college. The only real problem was deciding what rituals, superstitions, and pranks to use in the analysis.

ANALYSIS

This paper contains items of folklore pertaining to the game and culture of soccer. I have collected items from three different and specific genres: rituals, superstitions, and pranks. I will only be analyzing three items, one from the ritual genre, one from the superstition genre, and one from the prank genre. By the end of this project, I want to be able to show the reader that even though some of

GENRE: Ritual

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The ritual that Matthew performs before every home soccer game is: Matt puts his right sock on first, followed by his left sock, followed by his right shoe, then lastly followed by his left shoe.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He learned this ritual from a soccer player named J.B. J.B. was a senior when we were freshman. The informant shares this ritual with approximately 10 other players on our high school soccer team, and that includes me.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Ritual

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The ritual that Matthew performs before every away soccer game is: Matt puts his left sock on first, followed by his right sock, followed by his left shoe, then lastly followed by his right shoe.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He learned this ritual from a soccer player named J.B. J.B. was a senior when we were freshman. The informant shares this ritual with approximately 10 other players on our high school soccer team, and that includes me.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Superstition

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The superstition that Matthew partakes in before every soccer game is: He does not wash his socks all soccer season.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He learned this ritual from a soccer player named Scott. Scott was a senior when we were freshman. The informant shares this ritual with approximately 3 other players on our high school soccer team, and that includes me.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Superstition

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The superstition that Matthew performs before every soccer game is: He never excretes at least one hour before a game.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He made up this ritual. The informant shares this ritual with no other players on our high school soccer team.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Ritual

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The ritual that Matthew performs before every home soccer game is: He must hit with his hand all three sides of the goal posts.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He learned this ritual from a soccer player named J.B. J.B. was a senior when we were freshman. The informant shares this ritual with our whole high school soccer team.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Ritual

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The ritual that Matthew performs during every soccer game is: He rips a tuft of grass out of the sideline and throws it up in the air every time he enters the game from the sideline.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. Matt and I made up this ritual. The informant shares this ritual with only me.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Ritual

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The ritual that Matthew performs before every soccer game is: He prays on the sidelines with me.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He learned this ritual from me. The informant shares this ritual with only me.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Prank

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The prank that Matthew performs before every soccer game is: The impossible sit-up. The premise of this prank is as follows: generally an older player befriends the new player and takes them under his wing for a few days. After those few days, the elder player asks the new player if he knew that it is impossible to do a sit-up when one is blindfolded. The elder player gives a completely made up and bogus explanation to the new player on why it is physically impossible to do one of these "impossible sit-ups," and then proceeds to prove it with the help of the new player. When the new player's eyes are bound with a handkerchief, he is told to get down into a sit-up position, then when the new player is being psyched up and told that there is no way for him to complete his task by the rest of the players on the team, another player drops his pants and squats in front of the new player. When the new player is so instructed, he jets up at a very quick pace right at the behind of the squatting player. When the new player is about to hit the squatting player's butt, the other player that bound his eyes removes the blindfold. The result is many laughs and one horrified scream.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He learned this ritual from a soccer player named J.B. J.B. was a senior when we were freshman. The informant shares this ritual with our whole high school soccer team.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Superstition

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The superstition that Matthew performs before every soccer game is: He never touches the net in the backside of our goal.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He made up this ritual himself. The informant shares this ritual with approximately 10 other people on our team.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Superstition

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The superstition that Matthew performs before every away soccer game is: He wears his shorts inside out.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He learned this ritual from me. The informant shares this ritual with only me.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Ritual

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The ritual that Matthew performs before every soccer game is: He eats only pasta for dinner the night before the game.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He made up this ritual. The informant shares this ritual with no one.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Ritual

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The ritual that Matthew performs before every soccer game is: He drinks three cups of water at half-time, no more and no less.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He made up this ritual. The informant shares this ritual with only me.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Superstition

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The Superstition that Matthew performs before every soccer game is: He does not touch any of the line on the field until the game starts.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He learned this ritual from me. The informant shares this ritual with only me.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Ritual

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The ritual that Matthew performs before every soccer game is: He puts his "Star of David" necklace.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. This ritual started with him. He shares this ritual with no one.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Ritual

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The ritual that Matthew performs before every soccer game is: He wears his jersey to class the day of the game.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He learned this ritual from a soccer player named Scott. Scott was a senior when we were freshman. He shares this ritual with all the other players on our soccer team.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

GENRE: Ritual

INFORMANT NAME: Matthew Stern

ITEM: The ritual that Matthew performs before every soccer game is: He always wears a head band for the game.

CONTEXT: I collected this item from Matthew on the phone in my room on 9.17.00 at approximately 9pm Mountain time. Matt is 19 and I have known Matthew for about 5 years, and I have played varsity soccer with him for both of our four years together in high school. He is Jewish by decent and by choice, he comes from an upper-middle class family from South Saint Paul, MN. He has played soccer for 12 years, and he plays soccer for the University of Kentucky. He learned this ritual from a soccer player named J.B. J.B. was a senior when we were freshman. He shares this ritual with all the other players on our soccer team.

COLLECTOR'S NAME: Jev Forsberg

DATE COLLECTED: 9.17.00

Practical Jokes and Pre-game Rituals/Superstitions

Kyle Marshall

I asked Kyle if he had any superstitions and he looked at me like I was crazy. It took him a while to narrow them all down into the few most important.

- 1) Music: he listens to the same three songs before every game. My Hero by the Foo Fighters, Method Man by Wu Tang Clan, and Pearl Jam's Better Man 'Usually gets me going before the games'
- 2) Shoes: "I never polish my boots because it'll throw off your touch"
- 3) He doesn't put jersey on until go onto field to play.

Context: 1:00 P.M. Saturday afternoon, in his room. Kyle, 19, comes from an upper-class suburban town outside of Indianapolis, Indiana. He's played soccer for all his life, many years for Indianapolis United Club team as a defenseman.

Kyle Marshall

He told me a story of soccer parties after the final cuts were made for Varsity Soccer at his High School. All the new players had to go through initiation. The team gathered at one players home and immediately stated that the first person to run naked through the two trees on the other side of the lawn can go home and not go through the initiation 'ceremonies'. Uninformed that upperclassmen were waiting on other side of the trees in a shadow, the first kid to run through was grabbed and taped to the tree and left there overnight. They also happened to be right next door to the school.

Context: 1:00 P.M. Saturday afternoon, in his room. Kyle, 19, comes from an upper-class suburban town outside of Indianapolis, Indiana. He's played soccer for all his life, many years for Indianapolis United Club team as a defenseman.

Practical Jokes and Pre-game Rituals/Superstitions

(Joey)

(Joey) wears no underwear during the game because it allows for more freedom, it's cooler and lighter. He started the tradition years ago, since his career has been fairly successful, he doesn't want to change anything.

Context: I first found out he doesn't wear underwear my freshman year when the soccer team put out flyers promoting an important game, saying 'Come see if (Joey) wears underwear. Friday at 4:00 vs. St. Olaf.' Needless to say, the crowd was rather large.

Anna Engeln

A common prank for Anna's female soccer team was to crumple up enormous amounts of newspaper and fill up a teammate's room with it. When the 'victim' tries to enter the room, she is confronted with a wall of crumpled up newspaper.

Context: I interviewed Anna on 9/22/00 at 7:45 P.M. walking home from dinner in the Worner Center. Anna Engeln is a sophomore at CC who attended Mitchell High School in Colorado Springs and was a team captain for the Women's Varsity Soccer Team there. Her father played soccer at CC and recently received a honorary degree and spoke at the opening convocation the beginning of this school year. He also is the president of the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (N.S.C.A.A.). I've known her since the beginning of our freshman year.

Anna Engeln

Anna also always made a pair of decorated underwear with her teammates at the start of the season and wore them for every game, cleansed and washed for each game. They would put inspirational quotes, designs and whatever they felt like onto the underwear.

Context: I interviewed Anna on 9/22/00 at 7:45 P.M. walking home from dinner in the Worner Center. Anna Engeln is a sophomore at CC who attended Mitchell High School in Colorado Springs and was a team captain for the Women's Varsity Soccer Team there. Her father played soccer at CC and recently received a honorary degree and spoke at the opening convocation the beginning of this school year. He also is the president of the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (N.S.C.A.A.). I've known her since the beginning of our freshman year.

Anna Engeln

A prank that Anna's team did to one of the girls was to go into her locker and turn everything inside-out and upside-down. Socks would be inside-out, shoes would be hung-up where the jersey was and the jersey would be inside-out and upside-down hanging near the bottom of the locker.

Context: I interviewed Anna on 9/22/00 at 7:45 P.M. walking home from dinner in the Worner Center. Anna Engeln is a sophomore at CC who attended Mitchell High School in Colorado Springs and was a team captain for the Women's Varsity Soccer Team there. Her father played soccer at CC and recently received a honorary degree and spoke at the opening convocation the beginning of this school year. He also is the president of the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (N.S.C.A.A.). I've known her since the beginning of our freshman year

Sean McGinnis

The night before every game Sean spends up to 45 minutes cleaning and polishing his boots, either the Umbro Speciali (in his opinion, by far, THE best boots ever made) or his Nike Tiempo Premier (which are also 'sweet'). He washes the boots after every practice, dries them overnight, and uses Adidas Barane shoe polish to make the leather soft and a glossy black.

Sean McGinnis is a product of Colorado Springs soccer, he attended Air Academy High. Now a sophomore and starter on the CC varsity team, Sean is probably the most serious soccer player I've ever met. Soccer is his life and the victory of 'his' team, Brazil, will make him happy for days. His room (also mine) is covered with pictures and jerseys of Brazil and his closet is full of soccer shirts and jackets. He comes from an upper class family with a younger brother who is also a quality player. I asked him what his superstitions were at 3:43 P.M. on 9/23/00 in our room.

Sean McGinnis

While preparing for each game Sean puts his right sock on first, then his left (one of the more common superstitions I've come across in the locker room. .

Context: Sean McGinnis is a product of Colorado Springs soccer, he attended Air Academy High. Now a sophomore and starter on the CC varsity team, Sean is probably the most serious soccer player I've ever met. Soccer is his life and the victory of 'his' team, Brazil, will make him happy for days. His room (also mine) is covered with pictures and jerseys of Brazil and his closet is full of soccer shirts and jackets. He comes from an upper class Catholic family with a younger brother who is also a quality player. I asked him what his superstitions were at 3:43 P.M. on 9/23/00 in our room.

Sean McGinnis

When the team walks out from the locker room to the field for warm-up (always in two lines), the first step onto the field Sean picks a small clump of grass, crosses himself with it in his hand and then throws it. He uses his right hand and makes a 'claw' type action with his thumb, index, middle, and ring finger to pick up the grass.

Context: Sean McGinnis is a product of Colorado Springs soccer, he attended Air Academy High. Now a sophomore and starter on the CC varsity team, Sean is probably the most serious soccer player I've ever met. Soccer is his life and the victory of 'his' team, Brazil, will make him happy for days. His room (also mine) is covered with pictures and jerseys of Brazil and his closet is full of soccer shirts and jackets. He comes from an upper class Catholic family with a younger brother who is also a quality player. I asked him what his superstitions were at 3:43 P.M. on 9/23/00 in our room.

Sean McGinnis

Sean's boots are sacred objects to him. I've literally seen him get angry at people because they touched his Specialis without permission. The Specialis are no longer being used because they are so worn out and torn due to the fact that Sean refused to wear any other boots. Retired and sitting on display on a shelf in our room, the shoes are awaiting a burial in the north end of Stewart Field (our game field). It hasn't happened yet, but some night he's going to go down there, dig a hole and bury them under a goal mouth.

Context: Sean McGinnis is a product of Colorado Springs soccer, he attended Air Academy High. Now a sophomore and starter on the CC varsity team, Sean is probably the most serious soccer player I've ever met. Soccer is his life and the victory of 'his' team, Brazil, will make him happy for days. His room (also mine) is covered with pictures and jerseys of Brazil and his closet is full of soccer shirts and jackets. He comes from an upper class Catholic family with a younger brother who is also a quality player. I asked him what his superstitions were at 3:43 P.M. on 9/23/00 in our room

Sean McGinnis

Every home game our announcer, John Hilts, introduces the visiting team and then CC's starters. He says each of the eleven players' name, number, hometown, and position. Every time he comes to Sean, he'll make up a home town that has a soccer team Sean likes. So far there's been Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, Sau Paulo, Brazil, which is known internationally as a powerhouse for producing world class players, and most recently Madrid, Spain. It psychs him up and is intended to intimidate the other team, because Brazilian soccer is so much better than American soccer.

Context: Sean McGinnis is a product of Colorado Springs soccer, he attended Air Academy High. Now a sophomore and starter on the CC varsity team, Sean is probably the most serious soccer player I've ever met. Soccer is his life and the victory of 'his' team, Brazil, will make him happy for days. His room (also mine) is covered with pictures and jerseys of Brazil and his closet is full of soccer shirts and jackets. He comes from an upper class Catholic family with a younger brother who is also a quality player. I asked him what his superstitions were at 3:43 P.M. on 9/23/00 in our room

Steve Wells

Steve always prays during team stretching and warm-ups and says the same exact prayer every time.

Context: I e-mailed my best friend from Concord, MA last week September 19th, and on the 20th, at 1:27 A.M. he replied with a large list of his pre-game rituals. He's a sophomore at Connecticut College and is a member of the Varsity Team as both a goalkeeper and a midfielder. I've played soccer with him since 3rd grade and I've known him since kindergarten. We split playing time in goal during our high school careers at Concord-Carlisle H.S., and together we posted 15 shutouts in our senior season. He comes from a middle class family and lives with his mother and is a very religious person (Christian). His family is very sports oriented and he always played soccer or baseball with his older brother Dan, who played lacrosse at Gettysburg University. As a junior he was a member of the state championship lacrosse team that went 24-0.

Steve Wells

After the team huddles and yells 'CC' before the game, Steve always says the same thing to the starting goalkeeper; "lets go now, huge game, lots of talk, come on now". He then makes a fist with his right hand and punches hands with the other goalie, knuckles up. In high school we did the same thing except we put our knuckles together before talking and held them there until we finished talking.

Context: I e-mailed my best friend from Concord, MA last week September 19th, and on the 20th, at 1:27 A.M. he replied with a large list of his pre-game rituals. He's a sophomore at Connecticut College and is a member of the Varsity Team as both a goalkeeper and a midfielder. I've played soccer with him since 3rd grade and I've known him since kindergarten. We split playing time in goal during our high school careers at Concord-Carlisle H.S., and together we posted 15 shutouts in our senior season. He comes from a middle class family and lives with his mother and is a very religious person (Christian). His family is very sports oriented and he always played soccer or baseball with his older brother Dan, who played lacrosse at Gettysburg University. As a junior he was a member of the state championship lacrosse team that went 24-0

Steve Wells

“always put your socks, shinguards, and cleats on in the same order (i.e. left sock, the left shinguard, then left cleat or left sock, right sock, left shinguard, right shinguard...etc”

Context: I e-mailed my best friend from Concord, MA last week September 19th, and on the 20th, at 1:27 A.M. he replied with a large list of his pre-game rituals. He's a sophomore at Connecticut College and is a member of the Varsity Team as both a goalkeeper and a midfielder. I've played soccer with him since 3rd grade and I've known him since kindergarten. We split playing time in goal during our high school careers at Concord-Carlisle H.S., and together we posted 15 shutouts in our senior season. He comes from a middle class family and lives with his mother and is a very religious person (Christian). His family is very sports oriented and he always played soccer or baseball with his older brother Dan, who played lacrosse at Gettysburg University. As a junior he was a member of the state championship lacrosse team that went 24-0

Steve Wells

Steve always eats the same breakfast, lunch and/or dinner on game day, depending on time of game. The night before the game he always eats the same dinner.

Context: I e-mailed my best friend from Concord, MA last week September 19th, and on the 20th, at 1:27 A.M. he replied with a large list of his pre-game rituals. He's a sophomore at Connecticut College and is a member of the Varsity Team as both a goalkeeper and a midfielder. I've played soccer with him since 3rd grade and I've known him since kindergarten. We split playing time in goal during our high school careers at Concord-Carlisle H.S., and together we posted 15 shutouts in our senior season. He comes from a middle class family and lives with his mother and is a very religious person (Christian). His family is very sports oriented and he always played soccer or baseball with his older brother Dan, who played lacrosse at Gettysburg University. As a junior he was a member of the state championship lacrosse team that went 24-0

Steve Wells

“-ritual pre-game dumps (dropping phat/fat loads is a common one I believe!)”

The locker room always stinks before the game because the bathroom stalls are full of kids “shaving excess weight off”. Steve reminded me of a friend of ours who would actually hold in any bathroom urges for the entire day so that he could have a moment of joy and relaxation before the game.

Context: I e-mailed my best friend from Concord, MA last week September 19th, and on the 20th, at 1:27 A.M. he replied with a large list of his pre-game rituals. He’s a sophomore at Connecticut College and is a member of the Varsity Team as both a goalkeeper and a midfielder. I’ve played soccer with him since 3rd grade and I’ve known him since kindergarten. We split playing time in goal during our high school careers at Concord-Carlisle H.S., and together we posted 15 shutouts in our senior season. He comes from a middle class family and lives with his mother and is a very religious person (Christian). His family is very sports oriented and he always played soccer or baseball with his older brother Dan, who played lacrosse at Gettysburg University. As a junior he was a member of the state championship lacrosse team that went 24-0

Steve Wells

If the team is taking the bus to an away game, Steve listens to Rage Against the Machine at volume level 8 on his Discman. He sits in the same seat, alone, on the left side of the rear of the bus. Bus rides before games can be very awkward for any observer; complete silence to let people visualize and think about the game, and a lot of angry kids wearing game faces. A small thing, like someone listening to their Walkman too loud, can irritate another player quite easily. Descending for the bus, the team forms two lines and walks to the field, Steve will take the spot that he always takes (near the end on the left side)

Context: I e-mailed my best friend from Concord, MA last week September 19th, and on the 20th, at 1:27 A.M. he replied with a large list of his pre-game rituals. He's a sophomore at Connecticut College and is a member of the Varsity Team as both a goalkeeper and a midfielder. I've played soccer with him since 3rd grade and I've known him since kindergarten. We split playing time in goal during our high school careers at Concord-Carlisle H.S., and together we posted 15 shutouts in our senior season. He comes from a middle class family and lives with his mother and is a very religious person (Christian). His family is very sports oriented and he always played soccer or baseball with his older brother Dan, who played lacrosse at Gettysburg University. As a junior he was a member of the state championship lacrosse team that went 24-0

Steve Wells

Steve bangs his head on his locker, punches the locker, or something that won't break, before every home game as the team leaves to warm-up on the field.

Context: I e-mailed my best friend from Concord, MA last week September 19th, and on the 20th, at 1:27 A.M. he replied with a large list of his pre-game rituals. He's a sophomore at Connecticut College and is a member of the Varsity Team as both a goalkeeper and a midfielder. I've played soccer with him since 3rd grade and I've known him since kindergarten. We split playing time in goal during our high school careers at Concord-Carlisle H.S., and together we posted 15 shutouts in our senior season. He comes from a middle class family and lives with his mother and is a very religious person (Christian). His family is very sports oriented and he always played soccer or baseball with his older brother Dan, who played lacrosse at Gettysburg University. As a junior he was a member of the state championship lacrosse team that went 24-0

Past Experience

When I was a sophomore at Concord-Carlisle High School, the soccer team exposed me to something that has remained as the funniest locker room prank I've ever experienced. THE ATOMIC SIT-UP... It happened after we won a big game and the team psyched, we we're singing, dancing and yelling the whole bus ride home. Our coach mentioned the atomic sit-up to the captain, Darrell DiMare, and, just by chance, a curious freshman overheard. He inquired, and the coach immediately said "Nuggets, there's no way in hell you can do one". To any testosterone filled high-schooler that would be a challenge, and it was. Nuggets (Chris Nugent) insisted that however hard it was, he could do it. Darrell and coach explained that it was impossible to do a sit-up after pushing against a towel holding you down for two minutes. Nuggets was convinced he could do it and show the entire team that he was abdomenally superior. Basically, when we got back to the locker room, we put a towel over his face and held him down while he pushed against the towel for two minutes. Meanwhile Mike took off his shorts and quietly squatted over Nuggets. Two minutes were up, they released the towel, and his face plunged into crack of Mike's ass with quite a bit of force.

Context: The atomic sit-up was performed at around 5:30 or 6:00 P.M. in the fall of my sophomore year in high school. Mike Harney, the captain who planned the prank, was one of the best lacrosse defensemen in the nation in 1998 and now plays on a full-ride scholarship to Georgetown. He's a good athlete and leader, but he was not known for being kind to underclassmen, usually doing things meaner and more malicious. Nuggets, the 'victim', was a real cocky and arrogant kid, so, in my opinion, he was quite deserving. He wasn't hurt and didn't hold a grudge against anyone.

Kyle Marshall

When Kyle was a freshman in high school, the seniors made all the new players sit around in a big square on the soccer field, and gave them these instructions, "all you have to do is sit there and put up with whatever happens". The seniors placed each new player cross legged on a specific marked spot on the field. Within a minute, simultaneously, every guy sitting down jumped, startled to death. The marked spots the seniors placed them at were sprinkler heads to the field, and at exactly 4:00 they were scheduled to pop-up out of the ground and start watering the grass. The surprised new guys had a sprinkler head 'up their butts spraying water everywhere'.

Context: 1:00 P.M. Saturday afternoon, in his room. Comes from a suburban town outside of Indianapolis, Indiana. Upper-class family, age 19, played soccer for all his life. Indianapolis United Club team. He's a defenseman that I've known for a year at CC.