

The Ritualistic and Superstitious
Practices of Soccer Players

Jon Holdorf
Study of Folklore
Collection Project
9/27/00

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I hope not all at the same time here (We had this discussion!)

The purpose of my writing this paper is to gain a better understanding of soccer superstitions, pre-game rituals, and pranks. This project has many items of folklore that I accessed through interviewing soccer players and by being around soccer players for a great deal of my life. I'm a member of the Colorado College men's varsity soccer team, in it's 50th year of existence, a well known and accomplished group of coaches, players and trainers. I'm a sophomore goalkeeper from Concord, Massachusetts and I have been in love with soccer ever since my parents signed me up for youth soccer (against my will at the time) in kindergarten. My high school career ended on a painful note with a 1-0 loss in the state championship game, but despite that loss, I can't help but think my three years on varsity were wonderful and successful. Three playoff qualifications, first year we made regional quarter finals, second year we made state quarter finals, and my senior year we made it all the way to the state finals. I started games in goal with my best friend Steve Wells who is also a keeper, he'd play one game and then I'd play the next. It worked out wonderfully. I've always been a quiet figure on the team, just sitting back and watching the pranks and superstitions go on in the locker room. I'm especially quiet on this C.C. Team, partly because, unlike high school, I'm not close friends with the majority of the team and also because I still have fun just watching people joke around in the locker room. I consider myself a religious person, although I'm not really a member of any religion, more of someone in between. My parents both come from mid-western agricultural communities, both went to college and then met while working for IBM. My dad later attended graduate school for architecture in Boston and a few years later I was born.

When gathering information for this project, I took two approaches: one being simple observation in the locker room, the other being interviewing players from CC or other schools. It's difficult simply observing superstition/rituals because they are not always evident and obvious. I was watching the Olympics on Saturday night during the women's 100m finals when my friend pointed out something Marion Jones had been doing before getting into the blocks just prior of the starting gun. We started to notice a pattern after there had been three false starts and each time the camera focused on her and her preparation for the race. She'd kneel on the track with her right knee down, she'd rub down her thighs and hamstrings, rub her nose and then twist her wedding ring about a half rotation. Watching once, the observer could pass it off as nervous fiddling, but after two or three repetitions of the same thing, the observer can tell it's more of a

ritual. The only way to get around this is to observe soccer players over time and see if their rituals are similar each time, not at just one instance. Most of my observations came from high school soccer, where I both knew the players better and played with them for a longer amount of time. I found it rather difficult to observe people preparing before the game, while I was trying to prepare myself. When asking players what their superstitions were, some people had to think about it because they had never thought of them as superstitions, more as just the WAY to prepare, and some people didn't pause as they listed them off. I'll admit it took me a while to remember all the rituals and superstitions I had in high school when I started in games. A few players I asked, who I was sure had some bizarre ones, said they didn't have any rituals or superstitions and I was surprised that everyone was willing to tell me and risk jinxing it.

"Superstitious people don't discuss superstition"

-Rusty Staub

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.

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Sean McGinnis

Every home game our announcer, John Hiltz, 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.

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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.

Practical Jokes and Pre-game Rituals/Superstitions

General

A ritual that happens every year in the locker room is the 'hey freshman, polish my boots' ritual. Each upperclassman picks a new player to clean, polish and shine their boots for the first game. The only reason it is passed one from year to year is because "I did it when I was a freshman, so you have to do it too" -W.W..

Context: This is said the day before CC's first game of the season. I found out about it when an upperclassman asked to polish his boots last year.

Conor Shapiro

For warm-ups it usually goes; footwork, ball work, passing, small sided games and then shots on goal. When the referee blows the whistle to get the players off the field for introductions and national anthem, Conor taps the ball off to his left 3 steps and then hits a left footed shot on goal. He always has to be the last one to shoot, if he misses, it's saved by the keeper, or someone shoots after him, he'll take the shot over until it goes in. He needs to be the last player to hit the back of the net before the game starts so that **during** the game he can hit the back of the net. Here at C.C., Joe Hinebecker does the same thing.

Context: I didn't interview Conor, but I played four years of high school and club ball with him and every game he did the same thing. He now plays at Middlebury, Vt as a left forward. He comes from a upper-class Irish-Catholic family that moved to Concord, Ma (my home town) as a freshman in high school from Caldwell, New Jersey. His father plays and coaches soccer and both his younger brother and sister play quite a bit.

Jon Holdorf

The night before a game I always visualize myself playing the best game of my life and making unbelievable saves left and right. I put on Van Halen's *Right Now*, lie down, close my eyes and drift off into my own world. I see a red ball pass, then a blue and then I see a green ball coming and it comes closer and closer until all I see is green, then I'm on my favorite field lying down, I get up, and Steve starts taking shots on me. Eventually they get harder and harder and more players show up until there's a game going on.

Context: I played at Concord-Carlisle High School for 4 years and reached the playoffs each year, eventually reaching the Mass-State Finals my senior year. I learned this visualization practice from Per Hendrickson, a coach I had at goalie camp for five years. Some keepers believe visualization is the most important aspect of pre-game preparation and an outstanding way to focus. I come from an upper class semi-Christian family and my older sister is an awesome soccer player.

Jon Holdorf

Inside, inside, outside, outside, heel, heel, walk to other goal post and kick the post in the same order. Spit twice onto gloves, cross myself, look up, down, right, left. Before every half starts and, knock on wood, if they score on me, after a goal.

Jon Holdorf

If I didn't wear my gold and red Adidas Predator jersey for a game, I'd lose, no question about it. Every game I ever played in, in high school, I wore that jersey. Every playoff game we won, the jersey was on my back, every save I made and every goal that was scored on me, the jersey was there. I wore it because I wore it for the game before, it protected me and my team. If I didn't have the jersey at a game, I would have probably had Steve play, but I never forgot it. I cherished everything about it.

Martin Quinn

Martin puts his right foot in the boot first before every game

Martin Quinn is from both Neunkirchen, Germany and from Ireland, Germany being the most recent home. His father is Irish and his mother is German, the family speaks both German and English in their home. Soccer in European countries is a different thing than it is here, much more revolves around the sport. Martin told me that when his team, Bayern Leverkusen, lost their championship match four years ago, he cried and was depressed for days. People there not only are more attached to the game, but they also know a whole lot more than most Americans, tactically Americans are very deficient. He comes from an upper class family with three sisters, who are athletes too.

Martin Quinn

If Martin played poorly in the last game with one pair of boots on, then for the next game he'll wear the other pair.

Martin Quinn is from both Neunkirchen, Germany and from Ireland, Germany being the most recent home. His father is Irish and his mother is German, the family speaks both German and English in their home. Soccer in European countries is a different thing than it is here, much more revolves around the sport. Martin told me that when his team, Bayern Leverkusen, lost their championship match four years ago, he cried and was depressed for days. People there not only are more attached to the game, but they also know a whole lot more than most Americans, tactically Americans are very deficient. He comes from an upper class family with three sisters, who are athletes too.

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 players 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 players 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