



Pastor's Page

"More than just a game"

It's only a game!" Yes that's true of association football but I don't think that would be a helpful thing to say to Robert Green this morning! In case you don't know, Robert Green is the current England goalkeeper who suffered a World Cup nightmare last night as England 'our boys' were forced to settle for a disappointing draw in the opening game of their campaign against the United States. Steven Gerrard (Captain) gave us the perfect start to our South African mission when he slid Emile Heskey's pass beyond Tim Howard after only four minutes. And whilst we (England) rarely hit the heights, we were maintaining our advantage in relative comfort until five minutes before half-time when West Ham United's Rob Green suffered a lapse that will probably haunt him. Clint Dempsey offered an effort that was little more than speculative from 25 yards, but Green hopelessly allowed the ball to squeeze through him and roll agonisingly over the line as he tried to recover.

We had opportunities to repair the damage, but the brilliant Heskey illustrated his limitations in front of goal by shooting straight at Howard with only the keeper to beat. Wayne Rooney, (Man. Utd Hero!) subdued for the most part, shot just wide, while substitute Shaun Wright-Phillips, on for the under-par Milner after only 30 minutes, saw his angled drive saved by Howard(the American goalkeeper who is a Christian.) Most of Capello 's (our manager) major decisions last night backfired. The question as to who was going to be first choice goalkeeper had long been debated and only 2 hours before kick off last night the team was announced with Robert Green in goal. But after last night' s mistake poor Green must now fear for his place against Algeria. As for other players, well the winger Milner looked far from fit following a virus and Ledley King, whose fitness was also the subject of much debate, lasted only 45 minutes after suffering a groin injury. It exposed a glaring lack of pace in central defence, which was almost punished when Jozy Altidore raced past Jamie Carragher with embarrassing ease only for Green to make a great save by turning his shot on to the post (I felt so relieved for the England No 12 as he redeemed himself with this save) Well, our elusive second goal never came and so Rob, Carl (my mates) and I (along with the rest of the nation) had to settle for a disappointing draw. Nerver-the-less we have plenty of time to regroup and progress, and possibly put ourselves through more agony this coming Friday when we play Algeria!!

So why do we put ourselves through this agony? Well of course – we don't need to! (What a relief) We can all be sensible and remember "it's just a game" In doing this we'll save ourselves from the possible agony of defeat and all that accompanies it, but we'll also risk missing out on the amazing joy of victory and all that accompanies that. In the same way we can choose not to love too much in order to minimise the risk of rejection and all the pain that it brings – but then we run the risk of missing out on one of the most sublime of human relationships. And we can also choose not to surrender everything to Jesus and avoid the pain of persecution but miss out on 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10) Life is full of choices but some choices are more important than others. Make sure you know the difference and chose well because life is more than just a game!

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