

Colophon:

90 Minutes®

Eddy de Heij

Concept & Text

In collaboration with:

Steven Woudenberg

Illustrations & Lay-out

Roelant van Ewijk

Text & Editing

Daniel Liem

Content Advisor

Linda Slootjes

Online Marketing

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Your Life in **90** minutes **PLAYERS UNITED** edition

For Diego & Eliza



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Foreword

The birth of '90 Minutes' took place on the stands of Camp Nou, the home of FC Barcelona. Together, with a very good friend, we discovered the similarities between a football match and the ordinary life.

As people in their mid-forties, we established that we were starting out on the second half of our lives. We looked back on the first half contently and with joy. Not that everything went smoothly, but whatever happened, we never gave up. The talking and thinking in football terms was contagious and inspiring. My friends' son, a talented football player, picked it up immediately. By thinking in football terms, he knew exactly where he stood and where he wanted to go.

Encouraged by this success, I asked myself the question: 'What if life was like a football match of 90 Minutes?'

I selected 11 elements that can offer a substantial contribution to the quality of your life.

I would like to cover these elements with you in '90 Minutes'. I hope that you enjoy reading this and that you find some of these stories interesting. If that succeeds, my mission is accomplished.

Thanks

I would like to thank the following people for shaping '90 Minutes' Firstly, Steven Woudenberg for his beautiful illustrations. Also, my thanks to Roelant van Ewijk who contributed to the thought process during this writing.



Short Introduction

My name is Siama, I played professional football up until I was 35 years old. This was the most important period in my existence up until now. It's remarkable how many similarities I see between football and the ordinary life. Playing football has taught me some valuable lessons in life and I would like to share those with you. I translate 90 Minutes of a football match into 90 years of life and I hope at least, that these 90 years are given to me.

At the age of 45 years I am in the dressing room of my last club. A place that feels very familiar to me. It is half-time. Time to take stock of the first three quarters. What have I learnt? What went well, and where can I improve? By analysing this properly, I know what I must do in order to prepare for the second half of my life without football.



1. Half-time

Phew... a tricky match. I have to catch my breath for a second... just received a bump against my weak left knee, an old injury that's surfacing again. I was too late and should have engaged the duel with more conviction. More focus.

The first 10 minutes went decently, a bit of looking and probing. Then came two hits, one after the other. My brother's accident and the divorce. Luckily school, friends and football offered a distraction.

After 20 minutes, I started shaping my life more and more. I wanted to learn as much as possible and I was not afraid of making mistakes. I performed a few daring actions that worked well. My quick transfer to the media agency was a direct hit, CEO within two years. A good team with fine players. I dominated the game, passed good balls that were lobbed in the goal. Scored myself here and there. Awesome, life is a party. This is my game. A nice relationship, two wonderful children, enjoying life as much as possible with family and friends. Bring it on!

Fifteen minutes before half-time, the game suddenly tilted. It started with the takeover of a competitor, that ran into trouble. Our agency hit some hard times. Blaming each other, we lost control. I didn't know what to do, I hesitated too much. Worked even harder, tried to force it, but the balls bounced off my feet. Tension and irritation between each other. Even at home. I rub my painful knee. Old wounds.

That's not how it works. Take a deep breath and feel where my power lies. I decide what I want myself. I know what I want. Be successful, do what I do best. Focus, take time, distribute the game and make some runs. Yes, that is what I can do. No more, and no less.

This is going to be my half, the second half of my life.

The coach yells "Time!"
I think 'GO!'

Focus on your talent.
GO!



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Nobody can do it **alone!**

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2. My Team

We come back to the field. I look around and see my teammates. Good girls. Hearing the cheers, I feel the slaps on my shoulder. A tap on my head. 'Let's do it!' The captain pulls me aside for a moment, 'Keep it simple. I'll stay near you, you can always pass the ball to me.' This feels good, gives me confidence, I don't have to do it alone.

Reminds me of my first job. The combination of the urge to prove myself and the enthusiasm that made me get ahead of myself completely. My colleagues joyfully saw me go under. Felt frustrated and alone. Was this really it? My boss pulls me aside for two minutes. 'It's not about you, but about what we can achieve as a team. What is your role within the team? Think about that. You can always come to me.' A valuable lesson. No one can do it alone, and too much egotistical behavior is at the expense of the team's performance. Since then, I look around more, and am much more aware of my role within the team.

Keeping track, being available, and dividing the game. That is my job within this team. Let others score, enjoy the teamwork. That

goes wonderfully well in this team. Everybody knows what they need to do, and they are willing to go the extra mile for someone else. And, without a ball, we all hunt together. No one forsakes the cause. Everybody wants to be indispensable and will do anything to prove his value for the team. That is what makes us so good, and that is exactly how I apply myself nowadays, as the CEO.

The opponent understands that too, and fully goes for it. Even so, they complain just a bit more. Annoyed at each other and the referee. They try to intimidate us with their aggression. Don't respond, stay focused, keep each other on your toes. We become stronger and we get more scoring opportunities.

I'm hit! a full-on tackle on my left knee 'Ahhh... no! Not again!' The captain is with me in an instant. 'Are you alright...? Push through..., we're going to get them, but we need you for that, we can't lose you now!' Nice words, so important to hear. I know that all too well from my work.

True team spirit makes the difference!



Fair Play. Always!

3. Fair play

The medic leaves the field. The opponent got himself a yellow card. I suppress the pain, I'm angry, but somehow, I'm proud that they have no grip on me. It's a bit better already, these are the matches that matter.
I'll show them!

The desire to win forms the basis of success in the game. At football, and at work. How far do I go? The rules of the game are set, but the referee decides what is, and what isn't allowed. That is a matter of trying out, seeking out the limits. A shoulder push is generally allowed, but an elbow goes too far.

Faced with a strong opponent, we must pull out all the stops to win. It is then unavoidable that you will get to the edge, and sometimes even go

over it, showing you're there, and you won't let them walk all over you. That is the basis of success.

At work I also deal with rules that I must keep to. Written and unwritten rules. Obtaining information in a fair way, or honoring commitments correctly. No excuses, but honestly saying what's what. That is our company culture.

If I cheat, it'll eventually work against me. Fair play, always!

The same holds true for an elbow or irresponsible tackle, out of frustration or revenge. In that case I am no longer occupied with winning, but harm only myself and my team.

I seek out the limits but do so within the rules.