

## No matter how hard you train, sometimes you are just off

By Maryann Boddy

heard a pop, but the trainers reassured me it was just a tendon. I tried to rotate my knee, but it buckled every time. I prayed that it was just a strain, but the doctor said I tore my ACL. How could this happen to me? I had never sat out a match due to injury. Now I am missing a regional tournament, the first time my team's ever made it. I'm sitting out my entire freshman year, unable to travel or bond with the team. The realization of being bedridden for two weeks, of not being able to walk properly for a month, and of not being able to kick a soccer ball for five months literally

Six months of rehab later, countless hours of physical therapy, a little sweat and tears, and I was out competing on the field again. I not only enjoyed playing soccer at Seattle University, but I was also played several times with state and semi-professional teams. Joining some of the best talent in the nation, I played for a national championship with the Seattle Sounders broadcast live on the Fox Soccer Channel.

Two successful years have passed and I'm headed to Mexico to partake in a six month study abroad experience. Six days after I arrive in Puebla, MX, I take off to a local indoor fútbol arena to play a game of pick up. Once again, I heard a pop. I got an MRI and the doctor said my ACL was twenty percent torn. Surgery wasn't necessary; all I needed was ice, exercise, and strength

After two weeks of working out and feeling no improvement I sent my MRI's home. My doctor immediately requested my return for surgery, it was one hundred percent torn. How could there be such a disparity in opinion? I've already torn my ACL, surely God wouldn't let this happen again. After all, I had just embarked on this journey, and it's over in the tear of a tiny ligament no bigger than my finger? In frustration and disbelief I hugged my friends goodbye, waved farewell to the experiences I wasn't meant to have, and returned home for surgery on what was once my healthy knee.

When I was asked to write this piece I began reflecting on how my faith is present in my soccer career.

My soccer career is a physical manifestation of my spiritual walk. An injury in soccer is a physical blow just as a tragedy in life is an emotional and spiritual blow. In the same way, throughout your career, sometimes you fall in a slump. No matter how hard you try, how much you train, or how bad you want it, sometimes you're just off, and things don't go your way. The same speaks to my spiritual life. No matter how involved in the church, no matter how much I read my Bible, or no matter how passionately I pray, sometimes my spirit is just dry.

In my Christian faith I have looked to my soccer career for inspiration. There are no short cuts. You train hard because you know it will eventually pay off. This has helped me greatly in my new faith in Christ, as I have learned to persist and press on in faith when faced with suffering and grief. When it's hard to live honestly, with integrity and intention, do you become weak and discouraged, or do you push yourself to be the best person you can be?

I often ask myself, am I as dedicated to Christ as I am to soccer? Am I willing to work as hard for the kingdom of God as I am for my team, my career, and my dreams? If I can challenge myself physically, surely I can push myself spiritually to be the person that Jesus has called me to be.

Maryann Boddy is a student-athlete at Seattle University pursuing a master's in sport administration and leadership while playing on the women's soccer team.

makes me sick.