

# Dot gets sporty

Hi, I'm Dot Com and I'm a Brownie. Last month our Pack had a new challenge...

One evening, in our Pow-wow, Neelam had a bright idea. 'My friend Rosie's Brownie Pack are going in a Brownie football for tournament next month. Could we go in it too?' she said.

A couple of Brownies cheered but most of us groaned, and Phoebe muttered: 'Oh no, not football. I hate football.' I felt a bit mean, but none of us had ever really played football. How could we get a team together in just a few weeks? Sue, our Brownie Leader, had some answers... 'I heard about this too,' she said. 'The community coaches at our local football club are happy to come along and teach you all some football skills. You could learn the rules of the game and how to keep fit and healthy too.'

Genie didn't look at all happy. 'I really don't think I'll be any good at football. Can't I be the cheerleader?' she asked.

'I'm sure we can find something for everyone to do. How about it?' asked Sue. She was excited, and it would be something different - so we all voted to give football a try...

The following week everyone arrived ready for the first training session.

Neelam had borrowed her cousin's football boots and Isabelle was wearing her brother's Manchester United kit, which was about three sizes too big!

Sue introduced the football coaches, Marc and Nikki. They had brought along a huge net full of balls, some coloured bibs and what looked like traffic cones.

'First we're going to play a game called "Pirates";' said Nikki, 'so find a space and listen up.'

Nikki explained how to play the game, which she said would help with some basic football skills.



'When I shout "scrub the decks" you have to roll the ball back and forwards under your foot. If I yell "hoist the sail", throw the ball in the air and catch it,' she explained.

The game was BRILLIANT fun! If Nikki or Marc shouted 'shark attack' we all had to rush to the safety of the shark cage.

Anyone who didn't make it in time got tagged and had to be a shark.

At the end of the evening Marc showed us how to cool down with a few stretches. 'Next week we'll learn the rules and start playing for real,' he said.

Phoebe was first to arrive at Brownies the following week. She was wearing a brand new pair of football trainers. 'I've been practising all week in the garden,' she said. 'My big brother showed me how to dribble the ball properly. He's really good at football.'

She wasn't the only one to have got advice at home. After his Sunday league match, Dad had dragged me to the park for a kick-around. I wanted to play in goal so he spent two hours shooting the ball at me from all angles, so I could practise catching and diving. I got covered in mud!

Marc and Nikki talked us through the rules of football and we tried playing a short seven-a-side match. Phoebe was super-fast and scored the first goal. 'You'll make a great winger,' said Nikki. Phoebe beamed and punched the air!

Everything was going well, but Genie and a few others still didn't want to play in the team. Ella had hurt her foot (her pony trod on it!) so she couldn't join in the training.

'Right,' said Marc, 'let's think what you girls can do. Ella, are you any good at taking photos? We'll need someone to get action shots of the tournament. And Genie, I've heard you want to be a cheerleader. Why don't you and the other girls put a routine together? We'll need all the support we can get.'

Everyone was excited as the tournament approached. Marc and Nikki invited us along to watch a youth team match at their club so we could see a real game. I had watched some of Dad's matches but this was really exciting - less puffing and panting and a lot more action!

The week before the tournament we had a friendly game against the Cubs who meet in our hall.

Genie's cheerleaders yelled and waved their pom-poms, and Ella took loads of photos, but we still lost 3-1. 'Never mind,' said Nikki, 'it's all good practice.'

We had to travel to the tournament on a coach. Marc and Nikki came with us and lent us an old kit, which was red with white stripes. It was a bit big but nobody minded. Genie's cheerleaders sang their songs all the way. 'Two, four, six, eight, who do we appreciate? The Red Robins!' (That was our team name.)

When we arrived, we changed into our kit and started to warm up with a few stretches and a bit of jogging on the spot. We sailed through our first game - Phoebe scored twice - but the second game ended in a 0-0 draw.

'If you win the next one you're through to the semi-final,' said Marc. It was a tough match. The other girls were bigger than us and really knew what they were doing.

'Nutmeg her!' they shouted, or 'Take it round the back!'. I didn't have a clue what they meant! In the end we lost 2-0 but everyone agreed we'd had a fantastic time.

Then - surprise! - we were awarded the trophy for the most sporting team. Sue said it was because we all worked together and didn't fight or moan at each other when things weren't going well.

In the end, winning didn't seem to matter - the best thing about the whole day was being in a team and having fun together.

On the coach back home everyone was tired. Marc said we'd done really well to learn everything in such a short space of time. And Phoebe

said: 'Football's great isn't it? I think I might join a team!'

Dot has her very own website at [www.missdorothy.com](http://www.missdorothy.com). Why not visit her there? You can meet her friends and read all about their adventures - Dot has plenty of those!

