

BANDWAGON FANS OR CONTRIBUTORS ON THE TEAM?



GOOOOOOOOOOOOAL!!!!!!

Depending on which team you're cheering for, this yell either leads you to feel crazed enthusiasm or devastating disappointment. And every four years, teams from around the world represent their countries hoping to hear that cry over and over again until their nation is crowned champion of the World Cup.

Some teams have been there many times before—Germany, Argentina, France, Brazil. Other teams, like Panama and Iceland, are playing for the first time ever on the world's biggest stage.

Fans can get pretty passionate about their team. From painted faces to vuvuzelas, fans will do just about anything to show how much they love their country's side. The most



ARE YOU AS PASSIONATE ABOUT BEING ON GOD'S TEAM AS YOU ARE ABOUT YOUR COUNTRY'S TEAM OR YOUR SCHOOL'S TEAM?

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Church Magazines

common way to tell who someone is rooting for is their jersey. Most teams have a distinct look. Vertical or horizontal stripes. Plain white. Bright yellow. Blinding orange. When fans converge on a stadium, it's easy to see who is rooting for which team. And when you put on your team's colors, you feel a part of something bigger than just you. You feel like part of the team.

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

The big questions come when the game starts and things don't go according to plan. How do fans act when their player gets beat for a goal? How do his or her teammates react? What does the coach say or do? Is the team met with boos or cheers of encouragement? Do the teammates buoy each other up or blame each other for the breakdown?

Any of these things could happen in a game. But whether the team has been there a dozen times before or is appearing for the first time, there are some things you won't likely see. The teams won't give up; they play until the final whistle blows. Players don't walk off the field when their team is losing. They'll change strategy or tactics or lineups or positions or shoes or any of a variety of things,

but they don't walk away during a game. Coaches don't head to the airport while the team is still on the field playing. And fans don't switch to the opposing team's jersey when their team is behind or even if they lose. They all stick it out.

As teammates on God's team, we shouldn't quit either. Heavenly Father knows us. We are His children. He knows our strengths and weaknesses in the eternally important game of

HEAVENLY FATHER KNOWS US. HE MADE US. HE KNOWS OUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN THE ETERNALLY IMPORTANT GAME OF LIFE.

life. And there are many examples in the scriptures and in the history of the restored Church that show us what our Father in Heaven expects of us when we hit a rough spot on the pitch.

HOW DO WE HANDLE TOUGH TIMES?

How do we act when something happens that we didn't want to happen? There's a great example in the Book of Mormon of handling things well—it's when Nephi's bow broke at a bad time (see 1 Nephi 16:11–33). His family was traveling. There was no hunting equipment store. There was no two-day delivery from Jerusalem to the wilderness. But giving up and going home was not a real option for Nephi. He knew his family couldn't return either. Ever heard someone say, "Do or die," when it comes to scoring a goal? Well, this was "find-food-or-die" time for Nephi.

How would you have reacted as Nephi's teammate at that moment?

He was the superstar on the family hunting team. He had the best equipment. That is, until that equipment broke. How would you have reacted? How *do* you react now? If your parent loses a job, or if the family car breaks down, or if paying rent is going to be really hard this month, how do you react?

You can be like Nephi, who did his part and trusted God to help with the rest.

OUR HEAVENLY COACH

Speaking of God, if the Coach is Heavenly Father, we learn a lot about how He works with us as teammates from Nephi's example. Nephi's solution to his broken bow was to improvise by making a new bow and an arrow and gathering a sling and stones. Then he went to his father to ask where to hunt. In turn, when Lehi asked God where Nephi should go, Heavenly Father took the opportunity to coach

a humbled Lehi ("he was chastened" [1 Nephi 16:25]). Heavenly Father didn't make a substitution, but He did show Lehi how to use one of the tools he had provided as a new way for the team to move in the right direction together. The Lord had already given them the Liahona. Now He showed them that it worked, "according to the faith and diligence and heed" they gave to its instructions (1 Nephi 16:28).

If Nephi, his family, and Ishmael's family stayed loyal to Heavenly Father, they would win the match and arrive in the promised land. If not, they would wander around the field aimlessly with no direction and no hope of achieving their goal.

And of course, the Liahona worked. Nephi followed its instructions and was able to hunt and bring back food for his family. And you can bet there was a lot of cheering when he got back!

So regardless of how your sports team performs, remember that you're part of an even bigger team—Heavenly Father's team. And He *wants* you to win. Live loyal to Heavenly Father as your ultimate Coach, and follow His instructions. He will always be there to help you along the way. **NE**

