

JAKE MADDUX

SOCCER SHOOTOUT



SOCCER SHOOTOUT



BY JAKE MADDOX

illustrated by Sean Tiffany

text by Bob Temple

Librarian Reviewer

Chris Kreie

Media Specialist, Eden Prairie Schools, MN

MS in Information Media, St. Cloud State University, MN

Reading Consultant

Mary Evenson

Middle School Teacher, Edina Public Schools, MN

MA in Education, University of Minnesota

 **STONE ARCH BOOKS**
Minneapolis San Diego

Impact Books are published by Stone Arch Books
151 Good Counsel Drive, P.O. Box 669
Mankato, Minnesota 56002
www.stonearchbooks.com

Copyright © 2008 by Stone Arch Books

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part, or stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Maddox, Jake.

Soccer Shootout / by Jake Maddox; illustrated by Sean Tiffany.
p. cm. — (Impact Books. A Jake Maddox Sports Story)

Summary: When a new boy joins the Titans soccer team, Berk, who has always played goalkeeper, is challenged for that position and he must decide whether to hold a grudge or act for the good of the team.

ISBN-13: 978-1-59889-844-6 (library binding)

ISBN-10: 1-59889-844-2 (library binding)

ISBN-13: 978-1-59889-896-5 (paperback)

ISBN-10: 1-59889-896-5 (paperback)

[1. Soccer—Fiction. 2. Teamwork (Sports)—Fiction.] I. Tiffany, Sean, ill. II. Title.

PZ7.M25643So 2008

[Fic]—dc22

2007003635

Art Director: Heather Kindseth

Graphic Designer: Kay Fraser

1 2 3 4 5 6 12 11 10 09 08 07

Printed in the United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1	
Saving the Day	5
Chapter 2	
Another Player?	14
Chapter 3	
Meet the New Kid	20
Chapter 4	
Tryouts	25
Chapter 5	
New Position?	33
Chapter 6	
Let the Games Begin	39
Chapter 7	
A Little Help	45
Chapter 8	
Helping Out	51
Chapter 9	
Plan in Action	56



Chapter 1



SAVING THE DAY

Berk stood along the goal line. His heart was pounding in his chest so loudly that Berk wondered if the other players could actually hear it.

All around him, his teammates screamed for him. “Come on, Berk!” they yelled. “You can do it!”

Parents and friends stood on the sidelines of the soccer field. They, too, were yelling and cheering.

Berk danced back and forth on his feet, trying to stay calm. He wiggled his fingers a little to keep them loose.

The penalty kick he was about to face would decide the state championship. Berk always loved playing goalkeeper, but he never realized that the outcome of an entire season might be in his hands.

Berk's team had played a strong game. Peter Stanton, Berk's best friend, had scored the only goal for Berk's team, the Titans. It was a beautiful, curving shot from just outside the penalty area. But then, Peter always had a great shot.

That's partly how Berk got to be such a great keeper. Practicing with Peter and learning how to stop his shots had helped Berk improve his game.

Peter's goal had given the Titans a 1–0 lead early in the second half. With about ten minutes left in the game, the Cosmos had tied the score.

The Cosmos had a corner kick, and the player dropped the ball perfectly in front of the net. One of the Titans' defenders missed a chance to clear it, and a Cosmos player got a direct shot on goal.

Berk dove and stopped it, but the rebound went right to another player, who put it in the goal. Berk felt horrible, but the goal wasn't really his fault.

The rest of the game was close, but neither team had a great chance to score.

When the game ended in a tie, 1–1, it meant that a shootout would decide the winner.

Each team selected five players to hit penalty kicks against the other team's goalkeeper. Whichever team made the most goals would win the game.

Berk stopped the first two shots he faced, but the next two shots got past him. The first two Titans missed their shots, but the last three shooters all scored. Peter took the final shot and blasted it into the upper-right corner of the goal.

Now the Titans were leading the shootout, 3–2, and the Cosmos had only one shot remaining. If Berk stopped it, the Titans were state champions. If not, each team would have another shooter.

The referee approached Berk and reminded him of the rules. "Remember, you can't move forward until the ball is kicked," he said. Berk nodded.

Then, the ref turned to the shooter. “You can go on my whistle,” he said. The boy nodded.

The Cosmos shooter was one of their best forwards. He was the boy who had scored their only goal of the game. He had tried two shots against Berk earlier in the game. Both times, he had tried to bend the ball toward the right side of the net. Would he do it again?

Berk bent at the knees. He put his hands up in the way his coach had taught him. All around him, people screamed. The noise didn't bother Berk. In fact, he was so focused on the play that he barely noticed.

The shooter placed the ball on the penalty-kick dot. He backed away from it, lining up his shot.

Berk felt a bead of sweat roll down his cheek. The other boy eyed the net.

As the two boys moved into place, the crowd fell silent. Finally, the referee's whistle broke the silence.

It was time.

Both players gathered themselves for a moment.

As the Cosmos shooter prepared to take his kick, Berk felt a surge of confidence rise up in his chest. This was it. The state title was on the line. He was ready.

The Cosmos shooter strode toward the ball. Berk had only an instant to try to determine which way he would shoot the ball.

Would he go right again, as he had before?



Berk started to lean that way. Then, as the boy's leg pulled back to take the shot, Berk could see what was happening. It looked like the boy was going to play the ball with the outside of his foot, pushing it toward Berk's left.

Berk timed his dive to the moment the boy made contact with the ball. Just as Berk expected, the boy pushed the ball toward Berk's left. Berk took a quick step that way and dove low, directly toward the spot the ball was headed.

It was a near-perfect shot. It was low and hard, heading for just inside the left goalpost.

But Berk's dive was right out of the goalkeeping textbook. His gloved left hand met the ball near the corner, pushing it out past the post.

No goal!

The Titans players leaped into the air and screamed. They rushed to the goal as Berk got back on his feet.

Berk had made the save!

All the players piled on him to celebrate their first state championship.

Chapter 2



ANOTHER PLAYER?

Summer turned to fall, and fall turned to winter. Berk and Peter played football in the fall. Berk played basketball in the winter, and Peter played hockey. But for both boys, these other sports were just to keep in shape. Soccer was their favorite sport.

When spring finally came and the snow began to melt, the boys began to start thinking even more about soccer.

Springtime meant tryouts and the start of another season.

It would be a chance for the boys to defend their state championship with the Titans.

Berk and Peter practiced indoors as much as they could. They would go to the gym after school, and Peter would practice shooting against Berk.

Berk couldn't dive to make stops on the hard gym floor, but he could work on his footwork and other skills.

One day, Berk arrived at school a little late. He strolled into his first class just before the bell rang.

He took his seat in the row nearest the door. As always, he glanced across the room at Peter and gave him a nod.

Peter had a strange look on his face. He seemed to want to tell Berk something. Berk furrowed his brow, then gave Peter a look that said, "What's up?" Peter tried to whisper something, but the teacher interrupted.

"Boys?" the teacher said. "Is there a problem?"

"Ah, no," Peter said. "Sorry."

For the rest of the period, the boys concentrated on their work.

When the bell rang to end the class, Berk waited for Peter by the door.

"What is it?" Berk asked. "What's going on?"

Peter turned to face his friend. "There's a new kid," Peter said.

“What? A new kid in school?” Berk replied.

“Yeah,” Peter said. “And I guess he’s a really good soccer player.”

Berk thought about the comment for a minute. He wasn’t sure what to say.

“Somebody said he was from down South, where they play all year round,” Peter said.

Berk’s face lit up. “Cool!” he said. “If he’s really good, we’ll win state again this year for sure!”

Peter didn’t seem as happy. “Berk,” he said. “You don’t understand.”

Berk stopped and looked back at Peter. He could tell something was wrong. Then, Berk figured it out. The new boy must be a forward.

