

## Soccer Stories, by Tarit

I remember one of the first times I was in New York, I think for April Celebrations around 1979. The Meditation Flames were a big thing for the local boys and Guru was encouraging them like crazy.

It seemed, as I found out later, they sometimes struggled to get 11 decent guys out to Play. Anyway, I recall this young fit looking newcomer was asked if he played soccer, and next thing I know, even before I finished the reply properly, I am in the team for a game on Sunday.

It was great fun. I am sure we lost, but the experience, for a new young aspirant on their first trip to New York of being made to feel very much a part of something, was invaluable as most people can remember their first New York trip can be a bit daunting. Guys like Rupantar, Bhima, Tejiyan, maybe Bipin too all making me feel welcome. I was so grateful Guru had a soccer team.

On another occasion, we had travelled to Zurich as Guru was visiting. The very first Impossibility Challenger games were being held to coincide with

Guru's visit. Amongst all the inspiring things going on was a competition to see who could kick a football the furthest distance! I had signed up for it as were a lot of the boys who had even kicked a ball in anger!

I remember Guru being really taken with it and coming out onto the sports field to watch. I was pretty way down the order and we only had two attempts at once. That had given me time to watch how everyone else was approaching it. Most were going for a stylish look as if they were taking a classy corner kick, but they didn't travel too far. The best attempts were guys just pitching in and "Hoofing it" as we say in Britain, toe first.

Having also played a lot of rugby at school, I decided this was the best approach and I would try and go for the height and length option as if I was taking a rugby conversion. Well it seemed to work as I connected full on and the ball went sailing away into the distance.

When I looked over to Guru after my kick he was clapping like crazy saying "Good kick! Good Kick!" One of those many occasions when little childlike games we played, gave Guru joy.

A comment he repeated when I was called up later to receive a small memento for making the longest kick of

the day. I recall trying so hard to stay grounded, grateful and humble, while at the same time, part of my obvious un-illuminated self, also feeling like I was 10 feet tall!

Thankyou Guru,