THE MATCH THAT MATTERED

It was a bright Saturday morning, and the Under-12s were ready for their biggest rugby match of the season.

The whole team was buzzing with excitement–especially Jayden, their star winger. Jayden loved rugby. He loved the speed, the teamwork, and the feeling of scoring a try. Today, he was determined to give his best.

The whistle blew, and the game began. Jayden darted down the pitch, dodging tackles like lightning. But then, as he lined up for a scrum, he heard it–a voice from the other team. "Pass the ball, chocolate boy!" one player sneered.

Jayden froze. His stomach twisted. He'd never heard anything like that on the pitch before. For a moment, he felt small, like all the energy had drained out of him. He looked at his teammates. Did they hear it too?

The game continued, but Jayden's mind was spinning. Should he say something? Should he ignore it? He didn't want to let his team down, but the words kept echoing in his head. At halftime, Jayden sat quietly on the bench. His best friend, Liam, noticed. "You okay?" Liam asked.

Jayden hesitated, then whispered what happened. Liam's face turned red with anger. "That's not okay. We need to tell Coach."

The team gathered around. Some wanted to march straight to the referee. Others said, "Let's just play and win." Jayden felt torn. He didn't want to cause trouble–but he also knew it wasn't right.

Discussion Prompts

- If you were Jayden, what would you do?
- If you were Liam or another teammate, how would you support Jayden?
- What could the coach or referee do to make sure rugby stays fair and respectful for everyone?