

Changing a Bad Call



Several years ago, the *Chicago Tribune* carried a compelling account of Rob Mouw, a player on the soccer team in his senior year at Wheaton Christian High School in Chicago.

In the final seconds of a big game against favored Waubonsie Valley, with his team behind by one goal, Mouw was dribbling the ball in front of him, running at full speed toward the opponent's goal. Just before he shot the ball, though, he caught sight of the scoreboard. The clock read 00:00. But like any good athlete, Mouw shot the ball anyway, and it went in for a goal.

The referee signaled that the goal counted, and the game finished in a tie. The Wheaton fans cheered. The Waubonsie Valley fans cried that the time had run out.

Mouw had a choice to make. He could say nothing and avoid a loss. After all, it was the referee's job to decide the calls, not his. Or Mouw could do what was right.

Mouw asked the referee whether the official time was kept on the scoreboard or the referee's stopwatch. The referee said the scoreboard time was official and then ran off the field.

Mouw went to his coaches and explained that just before his kick, he had seen zeroes on the scoreboard clock. Since he had not heard a whistle, he kept playing. But his goal was late, and he didn't think it should count.

His coaches agreed, and they went over to the opposing coaches, explained what had happened, and conceded victory to Waubonsie Valley.

"Every time in your life you have an opportunity to do right, you should be thankful," Mouw said. "For a person to know what right is, and then not to do it – that would be a sin. To have won the game – I mean, really, who cares? Doing the right thing is more important. It lets you have peace."

Mouw later said he didn't think much about correcting the mistake on the field. "I hadn't done anything that great. For me, acting with honesty was just Christ in me."

Mouw went on to graduate from Wheaton College, and was a three-time NCAA Division III All-American and was the 1998 NCAA Division III National Player of the Year. In three seasons at Wheaton, Mouw scored 69 goals and tallied 35 assists, both of which rank in the top five in the school record books. His 173 career points rank second all-time on the Wheaton career chart.

(more)

Mouw led the Wheaton Thunder to the national title as a 1997 sophomore, helped the Thunder set an NCAA record 66-game unbeaten streak as a 1998 junior, and then led Wheaton to a national runner-up finish in 1999. Today, Mouw is an assistant coach at California Baptist University.

Acting with integrity is always the right thing to do, even though it may sometimes cost a desirable end. But as Rob Mouw pointed out, "it lets you have peace."

And that, friends, is a cherished goal for everyone.

– Beecher Hunter