

PODCAST



PODCAST 9 - MORE THAN A GAME: WHAT MULTICULTURAL TEAMS TEACH US

“SPORT BEYOND BORDERS: VOICES FROM A MULTICULTURAL TEAM”

It's a cold evening in late October. Floodlights cut through the fog at a small city stadium. You hear the rhythmic thud of footballs, echoing off empty stands.

On the pitch - a group of players in mismatched jerseys. They laugh, shout, switch languages mid-sentence. They call themselves Sloga FC.

This is not a professional team. It's a community project - a multicultural football group made up of migrants, students, and local players.

Each week, they meet to train, to play, and to talk - in five languages, with one shared goal: to belong. Tonight, we hear their stories.



Meeting the Team

At first glance, Sloga FC looks like any amateur team - sneakers, hoodies, a few worn-out balls. But once the game begins, something feels different. There's an energy of a small world in motion. Let's start with Samir, 19, from Turkiye.

Samir:

"When I came here three years ago, I didn't know anyone. I was afraid to join local clubs because I didn't speak the language well. One day, I saw people playing in the park. Someone shouted, 'Come join!' I thought they were joking. But they meant it. That's how I started here. Football became my second language."

Narrator:

For Samir, every match was more than a game. It was a lesson in how to live in a new country.

Samir:

"When you pass the ball, you don't need words. You feel the rhythm. The pitch teaches you respect. You have to trust others - even if you don't understand everything they say."

Voices from the Field

Standing nearby is Ana, 23, from Serbia, a student of international relations.

Ana:

"At first, I joined to stay fit and practice languages. But it turned into a school of empathy. During matches, you see how differently people express themselves. Some shout. Some stay quiet. Some celebrate wildly. It's like cultures meeting in motion."

Narrator:

And what about conflicts? Do they happen?

Ana:

"Oh yes! Once, we almost argued about who should be the captain. Some thought it should be the oldest player. Others wanted to vote. For a moment, it felt like a cultural mini-drama - tradition versus democracy. But then we talked. We realised leadership here isn't about who's loudest. It's about who listens most."

Learning to Read Between Cultures

In the goal stands Lukas, from Poland. He's been part of Sloga FC since the beginning.

Lukas:

"I used to play in clubs where everyone came from the same place. Here, you never know what language you'll hear next. At first, there were misunderstandings. In Poland, we clap after a good action. In some cultures, people shout praise or dance. The first time it happened, I thought they were mocking me! Later, I realised it was joy. That taught me something important - to read emotions, not just gestures."

The Coach's Perspective

Elena, the coach, is watching from the side. She's a teacher by profession - and the invisible glue of Sloga FC.

Elena:

"My job isn't to win matches. It's to make sure everyone feels safe enough to make mistakes. In a multicultural team, you can't just shout orders. You have to explain why something matters."

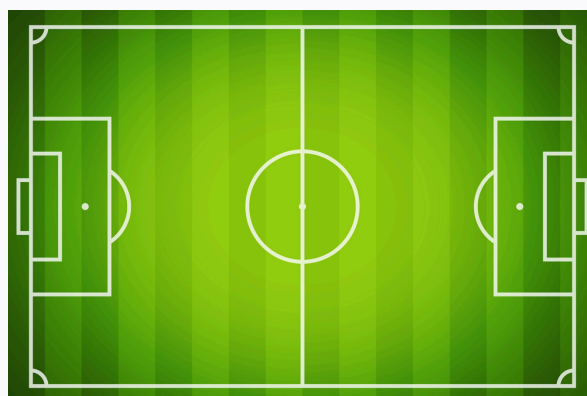
Narrator:

She smiles, watching the players gather around the ball.

Elena:

"At first, I tried the traditional way - strict discipline, fixed rules. It didn't work. Then I realised - this isn't just a football team. It's a living experiment in communication. Once I told them: 'You're not 11 players. You're 11 languages trying to find a common rhythm.'

And somehow... they did. Now, when they play, it feels like music - fast, messy, full of improvisation. But it works."



Moments of Change

When asked what Sloga FC has taught them, everyone has an answer.

Samir:

“I learned patience. You can’t rush teamwork.”

Ana:

“I learned to speak with my eyes. When you trust someone, one look is enough.”

Lukas:

“I learned that culture isn’t just food or holidays. It’s how you react when someone makes a mistake.”

Elena:

“And I learned that coaching isn’t about control. It’s about creating space for connection.”

After the Game

The match ends. Players sit on the grass, sharing water bottles. Someone plays music on a phone. The lyrics shift - Polish, Serbian, English - nobody minds. In moments like this, the word 'team' reveals its true meaning.

Not uniformity - but unity.

Not similarity - but trust.

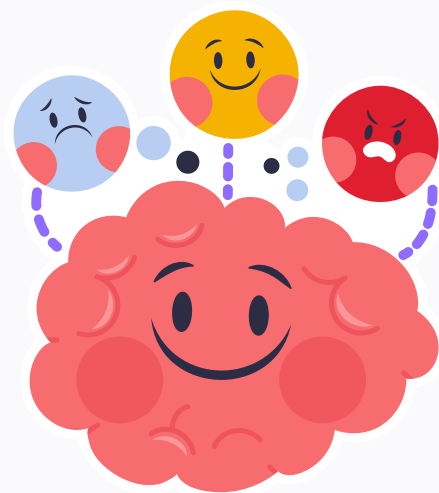
Elena gathers everyone in a circle. Each player shares one word about today’s game.

Samir: “Belonging.”

Ana: “Joy.”

Lukas: “Respect.”

Elena: “Learning.”



Mini-Manifest – The Rules of Sloga FC

1. We don't all speak the same language - but we all speak teamwork.
2. We don't avoid mistakes - we use them to understand each other.
3. We celebrate loudly, forgive quickly, and listen deeply.
4. Our jerseys are different, but our goal is one: to play together as humans.
5. We don't build walls - we build passes, bridges, and trust.

Narrator:

As the lights fade and the players leave the pitch, I ask Elena what keeps her coming back every week. She smiles.

Elena:

“Because every match reminds me that when people move, learn, and connect - the world becomes a little less divided and a lot more human.”

Reflective Questions

1. What similarities do you see between teamwork in sport and teamwork in everyday life or school?
2. How does this story challenge the idea that differences slow teams down?
3. Where in your life could you build more “passes” instead of walls?



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