



Daniel - A First Team Player

Having a good understanding of the first 6 chapters of the Book of Daniel will be very helpful for the Higher Rugby Coach.

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon gets the pick of the young men from foreign nobility to train as his servants. Among them four Jews: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They're just getting used to their new Babylonian names when they realise they've got to eat the King's food - dodgy, since some has been offered to Babylonian gods. (Daniel: 1-7, Street Bible)

Unit I - 'Transfer to the Premiership' (Daniel Chapter I)

Daniel and his friends were very fit and very bright when they were transferred from financially struggling non-league Jerusalem to Premiership Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar had taken over Babylon with his great riches and started swallowing up the smaller clubs by taking all their best players.

It wasn't easy for Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to settle in their new club since they couldn't speak the language and knew nothing about the new rules. A special coach (Ashpenaz) was called in to teach them and they were put on a 3 year apprenticeship scheme in the Babylon Academy. After completing this they then would be able to make their first team debut as key players for Babylon.

Then came the first problem: They were served food and drink from the King's table. The rest of the apprentices thought this was cool and quite a privilege. Not so the Jerusalem boys since they knew that eating and drinking from Nebuchadnezzar's table could only mean that they accepted fully all the rules of Babylon and what it stood for. This meant there would be times when their loyalty to God would be threatened.

Think!

What would you have done in these circumstances? Why?

The Jerusalem boys asked to be excused for 10 days and said to the guard in charge:

We'll have nothing but veggies and water; then compare us to the guys eating off the royal menu card. Make your decision on what you see. Deal? The 10 day trial is on.

They pass! Ten days later they look the pick of the bunch. So the guard goes along with swapping the royal food for veggies on a long-term basis (Daniel 1:11-16, SB)

It was a similar situation for Eric Liddell when he declined to run in the short sprint at the Paris Olympics in 1924 because the heats were to be held on a Sunday. Instead he was entered for his least favourite event, the 400 metres. Before he ran in the final a note was given to him with a bible verse on - **those who honour me I will honour (1 Samuel 2:30)**. Like the Jerusalem boys all those centuries before he was the pick of the bunch and secured a gold medal for Great Britain.

Think!

When might you be asked to do things in sport that aren't right?

How can God help? (spend time reading the Bible, being with other Christians and talking to God about the situation)

