

# Chapter 15: Battered

Chapter 15: Battered portrays the physical and emotional strain experienced by the Cubs football team as they approach the pinnacle of their season—the championship game of the California Interscholastic Federation, Southern Section. Their journey has already made history as the first deaf football team in California to reach this level. The Cubs had just endured a tough, hard-hitting game against Avalon, which left many of their players bruised and battered. For Trevin Adams, a key player on the team, the aftermath of this physically demanding match was particularly severe. Despite the rush of adrenaline following their victory, Trevin’s struggle with pain and exhaustion became evident as he boarded the ferry to Long Beach with his family. Every step he took on the gangplank felt like a challenge, with his movements slow and careful, showing the toll the game had taken on him physically.

The Avalon game had been an intense battle, and the Cubs had been on the receiving end of some brutal tackles. Many players left the field covered in turf burns, which served as painful reminders of the violence that occurred during the game. Trevin, in particular, had suffered the worst, with his body still aching and slow to recover in the days that followed. He moved cautiously around his home, struggling to find any relief from the pain. Felix Gonzalez’s struggles were equally significant, as an aggravated hip injury slowed his movements, making it difficult for him to stay on top of his game. Meanwhile, Jory Valencia was still fighting through a lingering stomach illness, making it harder for him to contribute as he had in earlier games. With only a week left before the highly anticipated championship game, the players were urged to rest and recover, leaving the intensity of football practices behind. The Thanksgiving break provided a perfect opportunity for the team to regroup, heal, and regain their strength before their next monumental test.

Instead of pushing the team to practice, Coaches Keith Adams and Kaveh Angoorani decided to give the players a much-needed break. They knew that with injuries and fatigue taking their toll, focusing on rest would be more beneficial than forcing further physical exertion. During the break, the coaches turned their attention to their upcoming opponent, Faith Baptist. This team, a powerhouse in eight-man football, had dominated the sport for years, with an impressive record of nineteen championship appearances and nine title wins. Faith Baptist's long-standing success presented an enormous challenge, and Keith and Kaveh understood that in order to compete, they needed to rely on more than just physical strength. They immersed themselves in studying game footage, analyzing Faith Baptist's tactics, and crafting a game plan that would allow the Cubs to overcome the odds and claim victory.

The chapter also sheds light on the deep and meaningful partnership between Coaches Keith and Kaveh. Keith, with his Scotch-Irish background from Oklahoma, and Kaveh, an Iranian immigrant who had attended the oldest deaf school in Hartford, forged a strong bond over their shared commitment to both the sport and their players. Despite their different backgrounds, the two coaches found common ground in their passion for coaching and developing young athletes. Kaveh had always been dedicated to the Cubs, but he had decided that this season would be his last. His decision to retire after this season was not taken lightly, but he knew it was time to step away after years of hard work and commitment. However, before retiring, he was determined to see the Cubs through to their best season yet. With the championship on the horizon, both coaches remained focused on preparing their team for the ultimate challenge, knowing that the upcoming game would mark not just the culmination of the season, but a defining moment for the Cubs' legacy.