

Chapter 4: A Taste of Victory

Chapter 4: A Taste of Victory takes readers through the highly anticipated opening game of the Cubs' football season, capturing the intensity of their preparation. After surviving a grueling Hell Week, the team is eager to test their skills on the field against Noli Indian, a smaller yet tough opponent from the Soboba Indian reservation. Dressed in their scarlet uniforms, the Cubs are filled with anticipation as they prepare to face off against a team that has been historically challenging. The senior players, Felix Gonzales in No. 1, Enos Zornoza in No. 2, Jory Valencia in No. 3, and quarterback Trevin Adams in No. 4, have each chosen their jersey numbers with pride, ready to guide the team through this critical match. Their focus and energy demonstrate how prepared they are to start their season with a resounding win.

The Noli Indian team, coached by Jesse Aguilar, consists mostly of freshmen and sophomores, and their inexperience becomes a clear disadvantage as the game begins. With little to no expectations placed on them, Noli Indian faces an uphill battle against the Cubs, who are more seasoned and physically prepared. Despite this, the Cubs face their own challenges, and the game begins with a fast-paced intensity that reveals the true test of both teams' willpower. However, the Cubs quickly take charge, dominating the early part of the game. Zornoza wastes no time, returning the opening kickoff for a touchdown, which energizes the Cubs and sends a strong message to their opponents. The momentum shifts decisively as Trevin Adams recovers a fumble and immediately leads his team to another touchdown, throwing a perfect pass to Enos Zornoza.

As the game progresses, the Cubs continue to assert their dominance, maintaining control throughout each possession. Their offensive unit remains unstoppable, with the team scoring on every possession and demonstrating superior teamwork and precision. In addition to their consistent scoring, the Cubs execute a pick-six, a

highlight that further cements their lead and showcases their defensive prowess. By the end of the game, the scoreboard reads 68-0 in favor of the Cubs, a stunning result that raises eyebrows throughout the football community. While the sheer margin of victory is impressive, it also sparks a sense of curiosity among the players about their own capabilities. The Cubs had not only won—they had crushed their opponents, leading some to question whether they were truly ready for the tougher games ahead. Key players like Trevin and Enos show their ability to dominate, but it is Phillip Castaneda, a new addition to the team, who steals the show. Despite some initial confusion, Castaneda scores a touchdown, making an impact that adds to the excitement and momentum of the game, proving his worth as an essential part of the team.

After the game, Coach Aguilar, though disappointed by the outcome, praises the Cubs for their discipline and emphasizes the importance of teamwork in such a comprehensive victory. His recognition of the Cubs' exceptional performance serves as a lesson for his own young players, illustrating how collaboration and commitment to a common goal can lead to success. Coach Aguilar also uses this opportunity to encourage his team to learn from the Cubs' disciplined approach to the game, which focused on precision, communication, and strategic play. The chapter emphasizes the high energy and rapid pace of eight-man football, a style of play that is unique to California's small schools. This fast-moving and dynamic format not only demands physical endurance from players but also sharpens their mental acuity, requiring them to think quickly and react swiftly to constantly changing situations on the field. Eight-man football has become beloved for its intensity, and this game highlights why fans of all ages are drawn to its exhilarating nature.

While the Cubs experience an unforgettable beginning to their season, the Noli Indian team gains valuable lessons from their loss. The inexperience of the Noli players may have been a significant disadvantage during the game, but they now have an opportunity to reflect on the importance of preparation, teamwork, and resilience. This match, though difficult, serves as a stepping stone for Noli Indian's future growth, as they take away insights that will help them improve in the coming games. For the

Cubs, this victory serves as an indicator of their potential, showing that they have the power to dominate when everything falls into place. However, the win also raises questions about how they will perform against tougher competition, particularly as their journey progresses. As the season unfolds, the Cubs will undoubtedly face challenges that test their resilience and ability to maintain their high performance under pressure. This chapter not only showcases the Cubs' impressive start but also highlights the evolution of the Noli Indian team as they continue their development. Both teams walk away from this game with lessons learned, and for the Cubs, this victory marks just the beginning of their quest for a successful season.

