

ZAC'S GAME PLAN

Story by Ewan Fowles
Illustrated by Lindsey Fowles



Carers WA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures; and to elders both past and present.



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My name is Ewan. I'm 20 years old. I was born with CP also known as cerebral palsy.

CP is a disability that means I spend the majority of my time in a wheelchair. Because of this, I have found that I am stared at and scrutinised a lot by the public for looking a little bit different.

I have the same ideas and thoughts as most others my age. I enjoy watching football, going out with friends and listening to music. I have the same interests and conversations as everyone else, and I'm tired of being treated differently just because of my disability.

I have started a company called 'Ewaneye Presentations'. My aim is to educate school children of all ages about different disabilities, and how they can help to make those individuals lives a little easier. I believe in a 'don't walk away, come say hey' approach. I hope to bridge the social gap between those with disabilities and those without.

When I was asked to write this book for Carers WA, I jumped at the opportunity. It has meant that I'm not only able to share my voice and passion, but also share my first hand experience.

I hope you enjoy the book as much as I have writing it!

**The game of life is a lot like football.
You have to tackle your problems, block
your fears and score your points when you
get the opportunity.**

Lewis Grizzard

This book is about
a young boy who
was born with CP.

His name is Zac.



Zac enjoys all things outdoors.
In particular, football! Zac's dream
is to become an AFL superstar for
the Fremantle Dockers!

Zac is not afraid to speak
his mind and stand up for what he
believes in. Although with Zac's
disability, there are some struggles
to make his dreams come true,
that doesn't stop this enthusiastic,
strong willed young man!



Zac's bestie is called Charlie. They have been best friends since they were babies. There is nothing these two boys can't do if they put their minds to it.



Zac and Charlie's school offer a football program. This year they are finally old enough to try out for the team! But.. if only it was that easy...

“Today is the day!” Charlie smiled, jumping up and down.

Zac was nervous, but not because he couldn't do it. He knew everything you could possibly know about football. It was because he always had a hard time from a few bullies in the team.

That wouldn't stop him from becoming the superstar he always wanted to be! Zac may look different and have to rely on his wheelchair to get around, but that shouldn't mean he can't be like everyone else.



“To your places”, Coach John called out.

Wheeling out onto the field, Zac suddenly stopped. Sam the biggest bully and Sam's friends were calling out, pointing and laughing at him.

They taunted him saying
“You have no reason to be anywhere near the football field.”

“Come on Zac, you can do this!”
cheered Charlie.



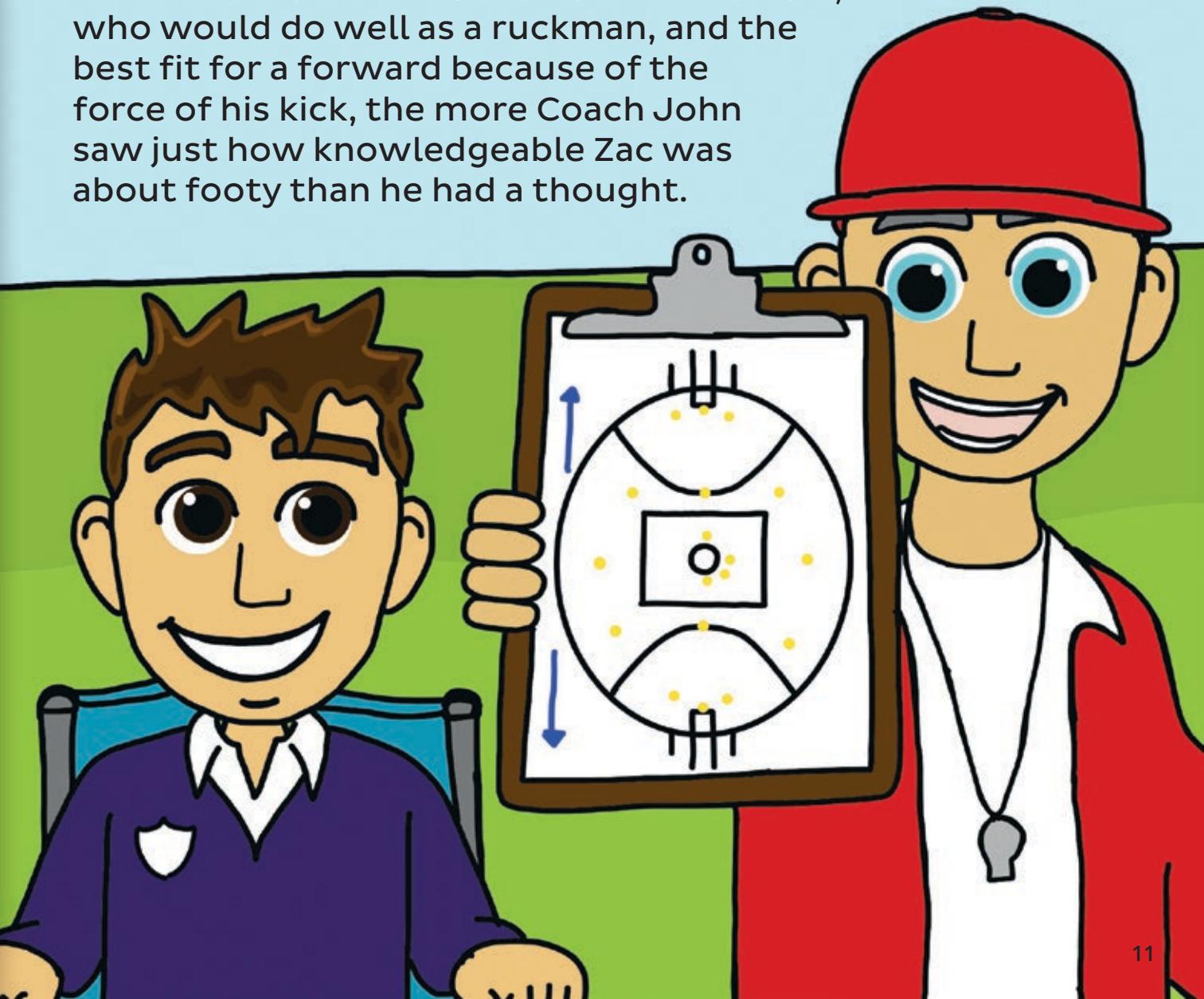
Everyone was looking at Zac, waiting for his reaction. Zac wasn't going to give them one. He was going to be the bigger person and show every single one of them their words don't hurt.

“Coach John, while the rest of the team do laps, can I show you some strategies I've seen that might improve my team mate's performance?”



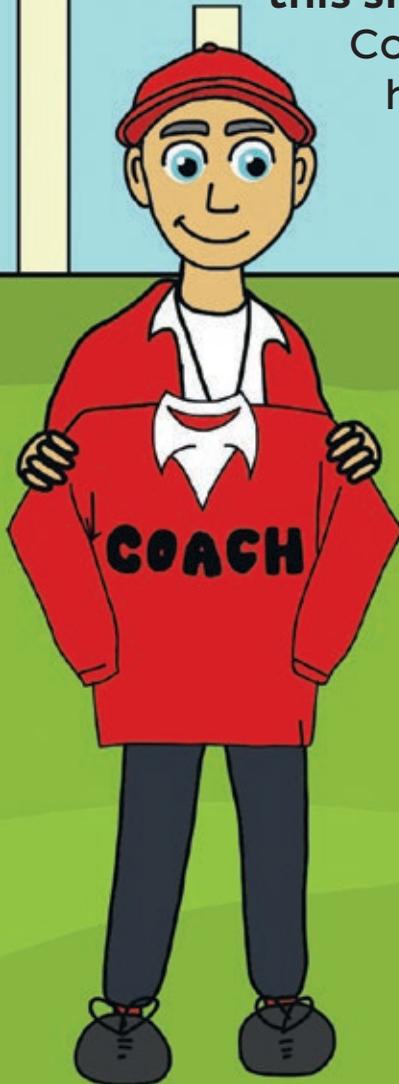
Zac was so passionate for football. You could see it all over his face each time he talked about it.

Coach John was shocked. The more Zac spoke and gave his opinion about which player should go where, what kids would make the best midfielders, who would do well as a ruckman, and the best fit for a forward because of the force of his kick, the more Coach John saw just how knowledgeable Zac was about footy than he had a thought.



“That’s AMAZING kid. You have a real talent and understanding for this game. More than most people I know, let alone for your age!

I know you wanted to play for the team, I don’t doubt your abilities but, have you ever thought about being on this side of the field helping to coach?”
Coach John said with a cheer in his voice while handing over a coach jersey to Zac.



Zac didn't know what to say.
He had never thought about
assisting the coach.



Would he be any good at it?

Only time would tell....

Two weeks later, with two wins under their belt it was the perfect start to the new season.

The team couldn't be doing any better.

Zac felt amazing after each game, helping coach the team and being a part of something special, really gave him a new outlook on life.

The respect he gained from each and every player made him truly happy, he was a part of a team. He was one of them.

He didn't stand out because he had challenges. He was treated the way every person with a disability should be.

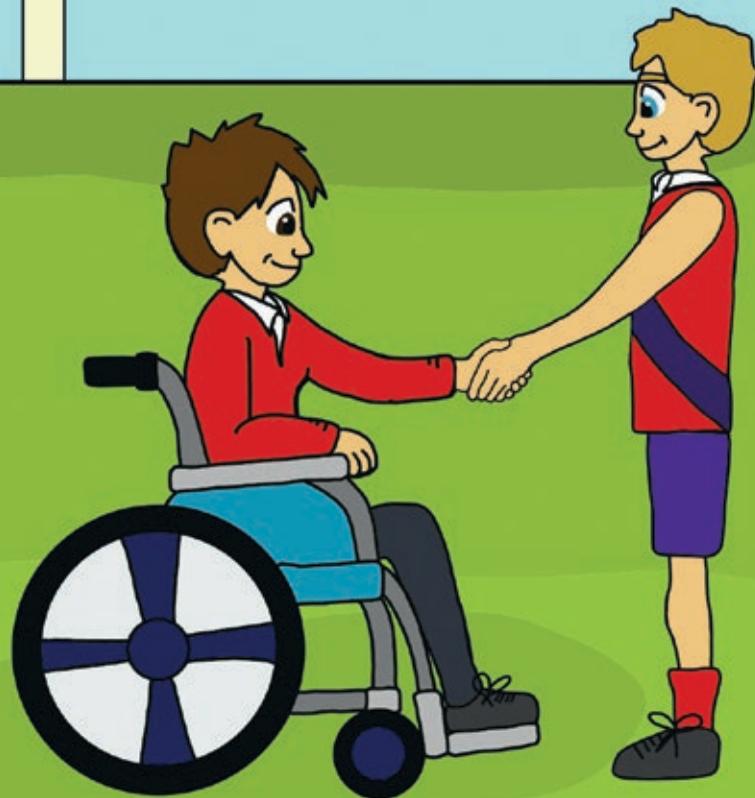
He felt just like everyone else.



After the second game of the season, Sam walked up to Zac. **'Here we go again,'** thought Zac. It's not like Sam had had anything nice to say to him in the two years they had known each other.

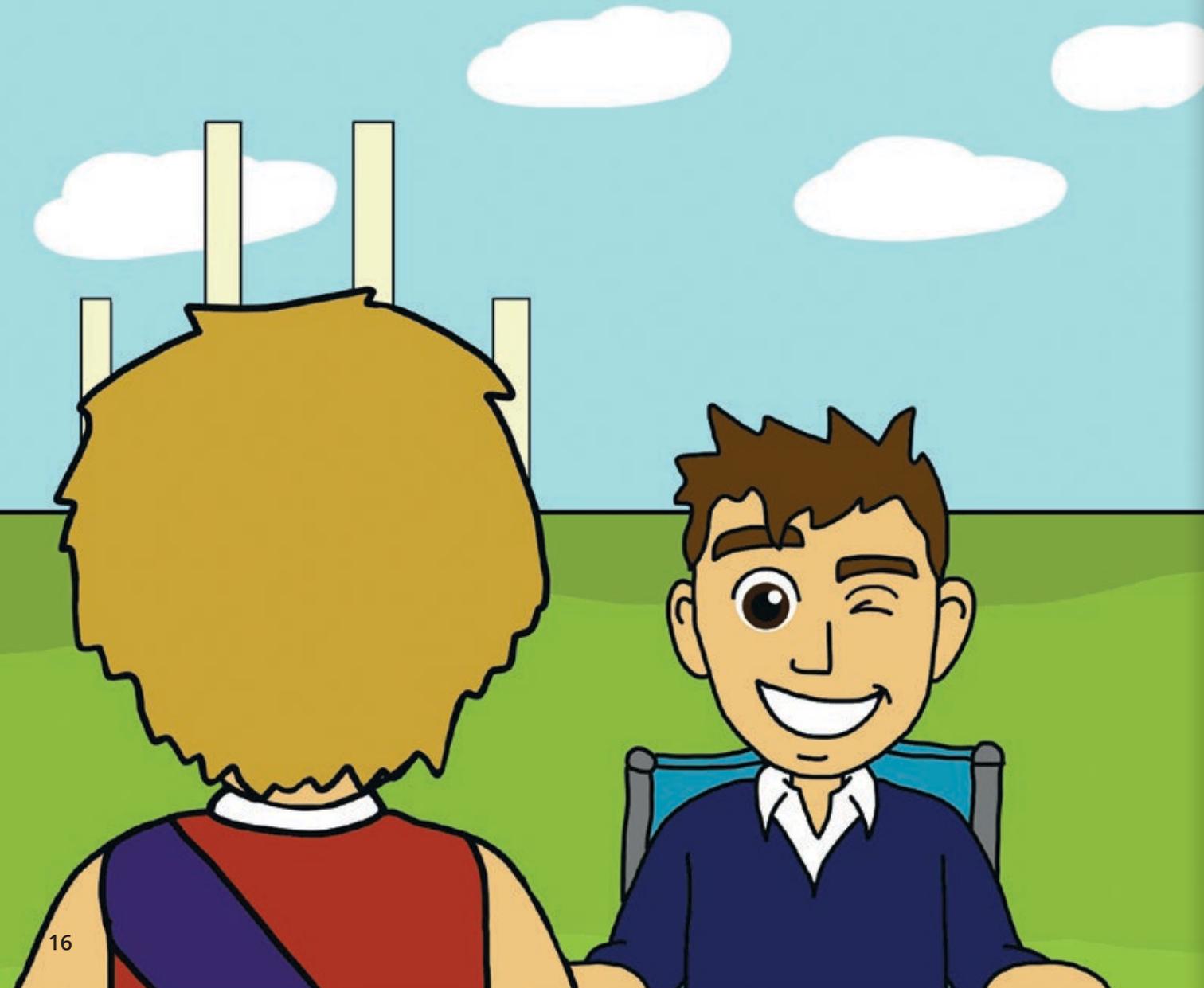
Sam exclaimed, **"I'm sorry I was mean and nasty to you. I feel terrible about all the things I've said in the past. Can you please forgive me? I guess because you looked different, you were an easy target for me.**

Again, I'm so sorry I can see now that you are just as much the same as all of us. I will never judge another person so quickly again."



With that being said, Zac looked at Sam.

“Thank you Sam, I forgive you. We may all look different on the outside but it’s what is on the inside that counts and if you ask me, it all looks the same.” 😊



GAMES

(Disclaimer: Age restrictions. Can be potential choking hazards)

HELPING HANDS CHALLENGE

.....

This game reflects the struggles that some people have when they have no control of their arms and or legs.

Requires:

- Water Jugs
- Plastic Cups

Instructions:

- In pairs, sitting at table, each person takes turns putting their arms under the armpits of their partner and pouring them a glass of water, then giving the 'arm-less' partner the drink of water.

FULL MOUTH CHALLENGE

.....

This game relates to the people who struggle to be able to communicate using their voices and who also may have trouble chewing their food.

Requires:

- Marshmallows/soft lollies – please keep in mind allergies or intolerances
- Flash Cards (make your own and use a piece of paper)

Instructions:

- In pairs, each person takes turns putting a marshmallow in their mouth and reading a statement off the flash cards, whilst the other partner tries to guess what they're saying. Each person has 30 seconds to guess before swapping over.

*If you enjoyed reading this book,
please take a moment to thank
the author by posting a review.*



This book dives into the challenges young people may have with disabilities. No matter what you face in life or the challenges it brings you, stay strong and never give up on your dreams.

Some people are born with disabilities and other times it can come later on in life, either way, it should never stop you from chasing what you believe in.

This book also focus's on the effects of bullying and showing you the benefits of not letting bullies bring you down. Zac is a strong willed young man who loves football and dreams to play for the AFL but not without some struggles along the way.

