

December 2013

A Moment in Time

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Recommended Citation

Pogroszewski, Alan (2013) "A Moment in Time," *Verbum*: Vol. 11 : Iss. 1 , Article 8.
Available at: <https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/verbum/vol11/iss1/8>

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Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"It was my junior year at SUNY Fredonia and I was our starting goalie in the 1986 NCAA Final Four. Our opponents in the semi-final game that sunny but cool Friday afternoon were the defending National Champions, UNC Greensboro. Fredonia's team had lost to Greensboro in the national semi-finals the previous year, and we had spent the entire year awaiting this rematch. We may have been considered the underdogs; however, entering the game, our team had only one loss in the previous 19 games and was ranked seventh in the nation. At the time, it felt like the most important game and day of my life."



Alan Pogroszewski

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The setting

It was my junior year at SUNY Fredonia and I was our starting goalie in the 1986 NCAA Final Four. Our opponents in the semi-final game that sunny but cool Friday afternoon were the defending National Champions, UNC Greensboro. Fredonia's team had lost to Greensboro in the national semi-finals the previous year, and we had spent the entire year awaiting this rematch. We may have been considered the underdogs; however, entering the game, our team had only one loss in the previous 19 games and was ranked seventh in the nation. At the time, it felt like the most important game and day of my life.

The game

In the first overtime, with three minutes remaining, we missed a wonderful opportunity to score. Wilson Cadet, ricocheted a wide open shot from inside the six yards, off the cross bar, which kept the score even at two and therefore sent the game onto penalty kicks. Penalties were taken by players of both teams, but the score was still even. It was now the turn of Fleming to take his shot and I knew how he had kicked the ball in a previous occasion. Prior to the penalty I made the decision to dive to my right the instant the ball was struck, in an attempt to get to the right corner before the ball. I asked God for strength, and as Fleming's foot hit the ball, I dove to my right; Fleming's shot went right up the middle through the spot I had just vacated.

The aftermath

Ten years passed. I was haunted by the memory of that kick and I had trouble moving forward with my life. I felt that this failure to stop the penalty shot had averted by life's destiny, by denying me the opportunity to be a national champion and not providing me the platform to springboard my success into a professional career playing soccer.



Although I was able to come to terms with my guilt in failure, I now wonder if my teammates such as Jeff Eddy were able to as well

It was May of 1996 and I was preparing to graduate with my Masters in Business Administration when I had the dream which released all the guilt that had built up over the previous ten years.

The dream featured my father, a gentle and caring man who never raised his voice in anger, shouting at me. In the dream, he was angry that I had automatically dived to my right. His argument was that if I had relied on my instincts instead, I might have been able to react to the flight of the ball and make the save. It was a very emotional dream and my father's anger represented ten years of pent-up frustration coming out and

verbalizing my own self-doubt about my decision. It was at this point when my subconscious responded to my father's anger. In the dream, I yelled back: "What if I hesitated to dive to my right and Fleming had put the ball there? How could I have reacted in time to save the score? I would never be able to live with that decision!"

A lesson learned

The lesson I learned is simple but important. In life we are faced with many life-altering decisions. The better we can understand our faith, mission in life and core values, the better equipped we will be to make difficult decisions. Even if we are forced to live with them for 10 or more years, our values and principles remain and become stronger. Solace may be found in knowing that, if we follow these guidelines, we may be better equipped to make good decisions in life, even if it may unfortunately appear that we made the wrong decision at a particular moment in time.

The children of Dr. Alan and
Jennifer Pogroszewski:

Noah, Frances, and Ephram

