



# TEACHERS' RESOURCES

## RECOMMENDED FOR

Lower primary  
(ages 6–8)

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## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Literacy; Critical and Creative Thinking; Ethical understanding

## THEMES

- FIFA Fair Play
- Bullying
- Believing in yourself
- Family relationships
- Playing as a team
- Sporting heroes

## PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

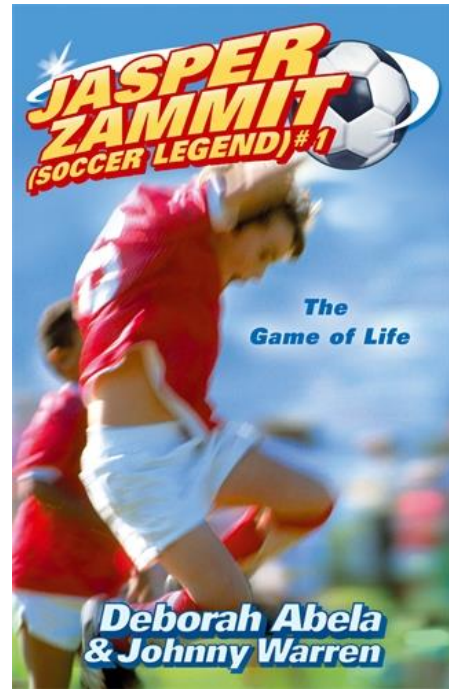
## PUBLICATION DETAILS

ISBN: 9781741660661 (paperback);  
9781742745299 (ebook)

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## Jasper Zammit (Soccer Legend) 1: The Game of Life

Deborah Abela & Johnny Warren

## PLOT SUMMARY

Jasper Zammit is a soccer legend – at least in his own head. Whole stadiums shout his name as he bends balls, accepts trophies and scores magic goals for the Rovers Under-11s. When a new girl, Lil, joins the team, Jasper thinks he's found someone as obsessed with soccer as he is. But there's one hitch - Lil's dad is the reason Jasper's dad has lost his job. Can the two still be friends?

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Having always been short and a bit of a coward, Deborah Abela dreamed of being braver and stronger, which is probably why she writes books about spies, ghosts, soccer legends and characters good with swords who take on sea monsters and evil harbour lords. She is the author of the Max Remy Superspy series, Jasper Zammit (Soccer Legend) series, Ghost Club series, *The Remarkable Secret of Aurelie Bonhoffen*, *Grimsdon* and *New City*. She's won awards for her books but mostly hopes, one day, to be as brave as the characters inside. Deborah is also a Room to Read ambassador.

Johnny Warren lived soccer. In his life as a professional soccer player, commentator and hero of the Beautiful Game, he believed soccer reflected life in the need to always do your best, to be a good human being and also in the highs and lows of success and disappointment.

## AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Deborah says:

Before starting to write Jasper Zammit, I knew very little about soccer, but with Johnny, SBS soccer coverage, local kids' teams and loads of books and websites, I've come to love the game. When I first met Johnny, he insisted that the Jasper books had to show soccer as a game of great skill and expertise but also as a game of great character and respect. Johnny said the way you handled yourself on the pitch was the way you handled yourself as a human being.

It is also a game of equality. It is the most watched and played game in the world and is often referred to as the World Game . . . whoever you are, whether you're rich or poor, from the suburbs of Sydney or the favelas (slums) of Brazil, from Asia, Europe or Russia . . . the game accepts everyone and unites a world in a way no other single event can, even the Olympics. The 2006 World Cup in Germany broke all records for TV viewing with a cumulative audience of thirty billion people!

## THEMES

### FIFA Fair Play

Deborah says:

*'The FIFA slogan, Fair Play, doesn't just apply to the players; it applies to the coaches, parents, spectators,*

*media and association officials as well. Be fair – every person involved in soccer has the responsibility to respect the game and set the example.'* (Johnny Warren, Jasper Zammit book 3 p. 151)

Johnny was a firm believer in Fair Play. He was constantly telling me how important the FIFA rules are to everyone associated with soccer. When the rules of FIFA are respected and adhered to, then it is truly a beautiful game.

FIFA is the world governing body of football (soccer) but it's also active in promoting Fair Play beyond the sport. Fair Play represents the positive benefits of playing by the rules, using common sense and respecting everyone.

FIFA has set up alliances with UNICEF, WHO, ILO, UNHCR, SOS Children's Villages and others, to link the power of football with the experience and ability of those who, day by day and side by side, are striving to make a better world.

The most hotly debated topics of our times, such as equality, peace, children's rights, health, education and the environment, do not escape the attention of FIFA. The fight against discrimination, racism and child labour and for better health, equal education opportunities for boys and girls, and the integration of handicapped people in society, are some of the priorities that FIFA has been concentrating on for many years.

### Activities

- Research what programs (outside of sport) FIFA is involved in to promote the principal of Fair Play throughout the world.
- Choose one of the programs FIFA has set up and investigate how it is carried out.
- How can some of FIFA's Laws be played out in your life? Write examples of how this may work in your school or neighbourhood.
- Write a short story, script, comic or storyboard where we can see one or more of the FIFA rules below in action. This can be done by student choice or picked out of a 'hat' so that all the rules are covered.

### Bullying

Badger Mackenzie has it all . . . a team who wins a lot, a dad who works at the TV station that sponsors them and new kit and gear that make the team look unbeatable. But he also makes a habit of winning by badgering the opposing team.



Read book 1, pp 112 – 118

### Questions

- Do you think Jasper handled Badger's teasing in the best way?
- What else could he have done?
- Badger is a good player, so why do you think he resorts to bullying?
- Have a look at p. 119–123 to see how Jasper's granddad reacts to what Jasper did. Do you agree with him? Nannu has also had a fight with his dad, do you think he needs to take his own advice as Jasper suggests?
- How does what Jasper has learnt about soccer help him deal with Badger's bullying? (See what Coach Wallace and Nannu have to say especially.)

### Activities

- What if Jasper had reacted to Badger in a different way? Draw your response as a comic strip, write it as a straight narrative or perhaps do it in pairs and act it out as a dramatic piece or read it out as a sports commentary much like Higsy and Richy.

## Believing in yourself

There are many times throughout the series where Jasper's belief in himself is tested.

Read book 1, p. 150 from 'The second half started with . . . ' to p. 154.

With only 30 seconds left of a game, Jasper is encouraged to take a corner kick by his team mate, Diego: 'You're the king of banana kicks from practicing with your granddad. I've seen you. It's freaky. It has to be you.' Jasper walked to the corner, lined the ball up and kicks the perfect curved ball into the goal.

### Questions

- What do you think Nannu meant when he talked about a team's 'chemistry'?
- How do you think Jasper would have felt kicking that goal?
- How do you think he'd felt if he'd decided not to take the shot and saw someone else shoot the goal?
- How do you think Diego's words helped him?

- Have you ever been in a situation where you've been scared to take a chance, but you did and it worked out?
- What are ways you overcome being nervous?
- How important is it to believe in yourself in tough situations?

### Activities

- Write an article about Jasper's famous goal. Remember to describe the action, build up the tension and capture the joy or despair on the players' faces after the goal has been scored. You may even like to interview Jasper about how it felt, after all his hard work in training, to kick the winning goal.
- You are a TV reporter or talk show host: interview Jasper about his big moment. Present as a video or act it out in front of your class.
- Write a diary entry or story about a big moment in your life where you took a chance and it paid off.

## Family relationships

In book 1, Jasper's dad and granddad have an argument. Jasper knows there is more going on than what is being said.

Read book 1, ch 8, p. 65 (in groups, solo or as a group read out loud).

### Questions

- How does it make Jasper feel to see his dad and granddad arguing?
- On p. 69, Nannu says 'That's not how you play soccer?' What do you think Nannu meant by this?
- Do you think Nannu and Jasper's dad each have a good point?
- Read book 1, ch 9, p. 73.
  - What is Jasper's dilemma in this chapter?
  - How does he decide to deal with it?
  - What are other ways he could have acted?
  - How does it affect his relationship with Lil?

## Playing as a team

*'Whatever the result, be satisfied that you gave it your best effort. Win or lose – either way you had fun and a chance to be with your mates.'* (Johnny Warren, Jasper Zammit book 3, p. 170)



The Rovers' coach, Coach Wallace, has a saying before each game, 'Play fair, play well and play as a team', but in book 3, the new coach, Coach Riley, wants to win at all costs and ignores these rules. Playing soccer in the Rovers U11s changes dramatically.

### Activities

Students are assigned roles and asked to read out loud: book 3, ch 12, p. 140 from: 'For the rest of the game...' to p. 145. Non-dialogue is read by a narrator.

### Questions

- What are some of the main differences in coaching style and attitude between Coach Wallace and the new Coach Riley?
- What are some of the ways Coach Riley doesn't act fairly?
- What do you think of how Nippy leaves the team? Is it fair?
- What do you think of the way Tricky has been playing under Coach Riley? How had his behaviour changed? (e.g. ch 12) Does he act differently on the field?
- Do you think Coach Riley could have dealt with the argument differently?
- Nippy decides to leave the Rovers for the Eagles who are at the bottom of the ladder. What are her reasons for doing this? Do you agree with her? (pp 149–150.)
- Ch 12, p. 145 ends with the line: 'The Rovers had won the semifinal, but to Jasper it felt more like they'd just lost everything'. Why does he feel like this? (FIFA says: Winning is without value if victory has been achieved unfairly or dishonestly.)
- How important do you think playing as a team is to the success of any team?

### Sporting heroes

Sporting heroes are respected and looked up to all over the world. And for many of them, there are great reasons why this happens.

### Questions

- Do you have a sporting hero? What makes them your hero?

- Why are sporting heroes or other heroes important to have in your life?

### Activities

- Research Johnny Warren or another soccer legend and find out why they are/were considered so great. Find out about other aspects of their life, other than soccer, that make them great.
- Or you could search for websites for national teams: some great teams are Brazil, Argentina, England, Australia, Croatia, France, Hungary, Portugal, Italy.
- Create a webpage or PowerPoint presentation devoted to your chosen hero, include pictures, a brief biography, some big moments and a report or blog on why you think they are considered so great.
- Write a newspaper article about your hero – remember that it has to have a catchy headline and story angle. See if you can find an angle to focus on during your research.
- Present a radio story about your hero including an interview with him or her. (Have a friend stand in as your hero. Record this for the class or perform it live.)

### FURTHER ACTIVITIES

- Pick a rule from any of the Jasper Zammit books and explain why you think this is good motto or rule.
  - Describe a situation in your life, not necessarily in sport, where this might be true.
  - Write a short story with one of the rules as your title.
  - Present your thoughts as a compelling speech to the class. What would be a great life motto for you?
- Higsy and Richy are famous commentators at a TV station. The calls of games in the books are always cut off by Jasper being pulled out of a daydream. Commentators are often known for their passion for their game and their tendency to get carried away during a game. In pairs, finish writing one of the calls ending the game however you'd like. Read this out in 'commentator mode'.



## ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Jasper Zammit (Soccer Legend) 1: The Game of Life	Deborah Abela & Johnny Warren	9781741660661	K-2	\$14.99		
Jasper Zammit (Soccer Legend) 2: The Game of Life	Deborah Abela & Johnny Warren	9781741660869	K-2	\$14.99		
Jasper Zammit (Soccer Legend) 3: The Game of Life	Deborah Abela & Johnny Warren	9781741661002	K-2	\$14.99		
Football High 1: Young Gun	Patrick Loughlin	9781925324501	3-5	\$14.99		
Football High 2: Fire Up	Patrick Loughlin	9781925324525	3-5	\$14.99		
<b>TOTAL</b>						

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