

A Champion Who Championed Sport for All

When (1) **their** talent brings them wealth and people's attention, some great athletes use (2) **them** to benefit others.

Dutch soccer player Johan Cruyff is a case in point. He was born in April, 1947 in Amsterdam, (3) **which** is home to the soccer team Ajax. Cruyff, (4) **whose** father died when he was 12, grew up in a poor neighborhood near Ajax's stadium, (5) **where** his mother worked as a cleaner. From an early age, he played soccer in the street with other children. Then, at the age of ten, he joined the Ajax youth team.

Cruyff was noticed by Ajax manager Rinus Michels, (6) **who** had invented a new way of playing, called *Total Soccer*. In Total Soccer, all the players (except the goalkeeper) moved around and played all positions. Cruyff was perfect for (7) **it**, as he had the skills, the speed, and the intelligence to play in any position. Soon, his extraordinary talent and spectacular style became very well known internationally, and in addition to being captain of the Netherlands national team, (8) **he** played for various teams in Europe and the US. He was voted best European soccer player of all time, and second best (after the Brazilian, Pelé) in the world.

When (9) **he** was living in the US with his wife and three children, Cruyff noticed a young boy (10) **who** lived next door and was always alone while other children played outside. (11) **He** had Down syndrome, and he was not accepted by the other children. Cruyff started playing with him, and he noticed that the games and sports that (12) **they** played together were helping the child to develop and find some confidence—to the point that one day the boy just walked up to the place (13) **where** the other children were playing and joined them. From then on, he was part of the group.

This friendship confirmed Cruyff's belief that sports are important for children not only because they make them stronger and healthier, but also because (14) **they** connect children to each other even if (15) **they** come from different cultures and have different levels of ability. However, (16) **he** also knew that not all children have an opportunity to play sports: disabilities, lack of money, or lack of space can all stop children from being active.

So, in 1997, Cruyff started the Johan Cruyff Foundation. It builds small soccer fields—called "Cruyff Courts"—with artificial grass in poor neighborhoods, supports projects for children with disabilities, and brings mobile courts to refugee centers. By the time Cruyff died in March, 2016, his foundation had built over 200 Cruyff Courts all over the world, 33 of (17) **which** were specially designed for children with disabilities. The foundation continues his work and has built many more courts since (18) **his** death.

▼ Ajax's stadium was renamed the Johan Cruyff Arena in 2018.



Unit 8

A Skim the article about Johan Cruyff and check the true sentence.

- ☐ 1. Cruyff was the best goalkeeper in the history of European soccer.
- ☐ 2. Cruyff created his foundation because a young boy asked him to.
- ☐ 3. When he was a child, Cruyff had space to play that a lot of children today don't have.

B Read the article. Then read the sentences and write *T* (true), *F* (false), or *NG* (not given).

- _____ 1. Cruyff's parents supported his passion for soccer.
- _____ 2. Ajax is a soccer team in Amsterdam.
- _____ 3. Cruyff's first team employed his mother as a cleaner.
- _____ 4. Cruyff invented Total Soccer.
- _____ 5. Cruyff's style was very exciting to watch.
- _____ 6. Cruyff used sports to connect with a child with a disability.
- _____ 7. Cruyff didn't like children playing outside his house in the US.
- _____ 8. Cruyff believed that children of different backgrounds must not play together.
- _____ 9. Cruyff died soon after his 69th birthday.
- _____ 10. The Cruyff Foundation works for children who don't have access to sports facilities.

C Look at the pronouns in bold in the text and write who or what they refer to.

- 1. **their** some great athletes
- 2. **them** _____
- 3. **which** _____
- 4. **whose** _____
- 5. **where** _____
- 6. **who** _____
- 7. **it** _____
- 8. **he** _____
- 9. **he** _____
- 10. **who** _____
- 11. **He** _____
- 12. **they** _____
- 13. **where** _____
- 14. **they** _____
- 15. **they** _____
- 16. **he** _____
- 17. **which** _____
- 18. **his** _____



- ▲ Cruyff's style of soccer was popular all around the world, as shown in his appearance on this postage stamp from Malawi.