

Teen soccer player with one leg says "nobody can get past me"

By Agence France-Presse, adapted by Newsela staff on 04.23.19

Word Count 576

Level 720L



Image 1. Kaung Khant Lin (center) fights for the ball during a soccer match in Yangon, Myanmar. The 16-year-old was honored as the best player in a recent tournament. Photo by: Sai Aung Main/AFP/Getty Images

Sixteen-year-old Kaung Khant Lin is obsessed with soccer. His favorite team is England's Manchester United. He worships the team's star player, Lionel Messi. And Kuang Khant Lin plays soccer, too. In a recent tournament, he was named the best player.

That is an accomplishment for anyone, but it is a particularly big achievement for Kaung Khant Lin because he was born with only part of his right leg. He uses a crutch to play. Kaung Khant Lin is the only soccer player on his team who has a physical challenge.

"Whenever I play, I forget about my legs," he says.

"Nobody Can Get Past Me"

Kaung Khant Lin is from Myanmar, a country also known as Burma. It is located in Southeast Asia. Kaung Khant Lin plays in the city of Yangon. He dribbles a ball with amazing agility and turns expertly on the crutch. When he is ready to score, he shoots with his left foot.

He remembers first kicking a ball around the streets when he was 5 years old. He kept his balance using a wooden crutch made by his uncle.

Now, he sees himself as pretty skillful on the soccer field. He does not think of his missing leg as a weakness. In his opinion, his biggest weakness is his height.

"Nobody can get past me," he says. "But it's hard for me to defend against free kicks as I'm short."

Landmine Explosions Have Hurt Many People

Nearly 1 in 50 people in Myanmar has a physical challenge that affects their ability to walk. That is according to the country's latest survey of the population. It was done in 2014.

Many of these people are survivors of landmine explosions. For years, there has been a great deal of conflict and fighting in Myanmar. During this time many mines have been planted in the country's borderlands.

People with physical challenges experience many difficulties in Myanmar. About 8 out of every 10 people with disabilities are unemployed. That is according to Thin Thin Htet. She is a program manager at Shwe Minn Tha Foundation in Myanmar. This foundation fights for the rights of people with disabilities.

"Most people think that those with disabilities cannot work," she says.



Determined To Play

Kaung Khant Lin is proving those people wrong. He rose to local fame in a recent soccer tournament. He scored two goals that helped his team win and was named "player of the tournament."

Moe Sat Han is one of Kaung Khant Lin's teammates. He says other players used to worry about Kaung Khant Lin. They feared his left leg could get broken. There was no way they could stop him from playing, though. Kaung Khant Lin was determined.

The team often plays from morning until night. Sometimes they even forget to eat. That makes Kaung Khant Lin's dad upset, Moe Sat Han says.

Kaung Khant Lin's father said he cannot watch his son play.

"I don't want to see him get injured," he explains. He wants his son to go to college.

Kaung Khant Lin works hard at school. He hopes to study mechanical engineering. He also dreams of becoming a soccer coach someday.

In the meantime, he will keep trying to play like his hero, soccer star Lionel Messi. "He's left-handed and I am too," Kaung Khant Lin says. "I practice free kicks just like he does."

Quiz

- 1 Read the following sentence from the section "Determined To Play."

He scored two goals that helped his team win and was named "player of the tournament."

How does the sentence above support the MAIN idea of the article?

- (A) It shows that Kaung Khant Lin's teammates appreciate him.
 - (B) It shows how Kaung Khant Lin plays soccer with his crutch.
 - (C) It shows that Kaung Khant Lin is popular in his city.
 - (D) It shows that Kaung Khant Lin is a good soccer player.
- 2 Select the sentence that summarizes the article.
- (A) Kaung Khant Lin has become a successful soccer player despite being born with one leg.
 - (B) Kaung Khant Lin is a soccer star in Yangon, where he recently was named "player of the tournament."
 - (C) Kaung Khant Lin learned to play soccer at age 5 after his uncle made him a crutch.
 - (D) Kaung Khant Lin is one of many people in Myanmar who have a disability that makes walking hard.
- 3 Why does Kaung Khant Lin's father worry about his son playing soccer?
- (A) He is afraid that Kaung Khant Lin will be hurt playing.
 - (B) He wants him to go to college instead of playing soccer.
 - (C) He is upset that Kaung Khant Lin forgets to eat when he is playing.
 - (D) He is nervous about Kaung Khant Lin playing soccer in the dark.

4 Complete the sentence.

Conflict and fighting in Myanmar caused _____.

- (A) Kaung Khant Lin to be born with one leg
- (B) landmines to be planted in many parts of the country
- (C) discrimination against people with physical challenges
- (D) many people in Myanmar to be unemployed