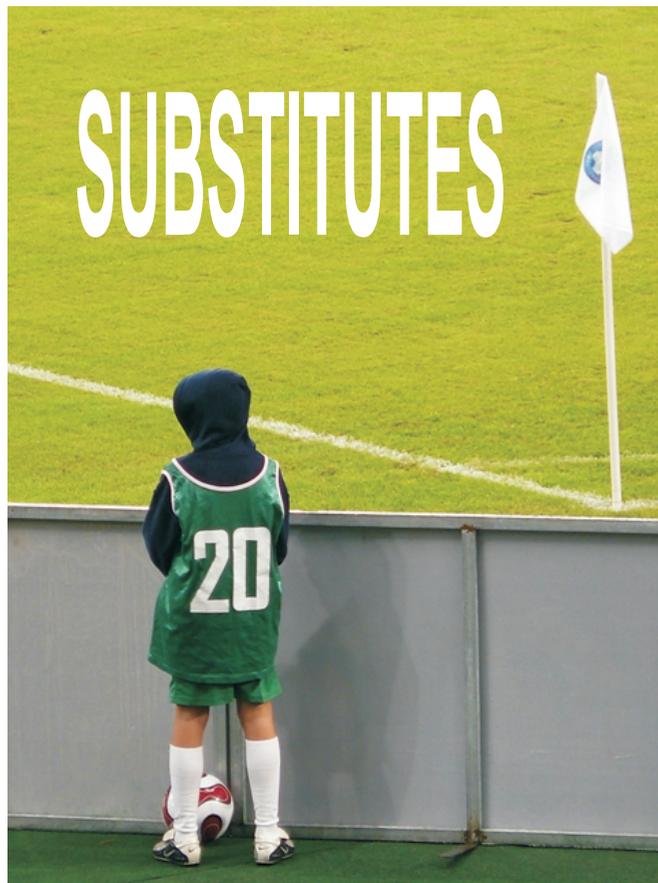


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SUBSTITUTES

There was a time when a soccer match was played with 11 men on each side. Now it is usual to see as many as 12 or 13 different players on each side during the game. The "Twelfth Man" on the side is no longer the one who carries the bags, or it's the young professional taken along for the experience.

He is now an important part of the team, because he could well be called on to play. The change in the laws concerning substitutes called for a fresh approach to the game. The substitute is now bought on when another team member is injured, or is off form, or because the manager feels a different player combination will win the match.

There are times when we could all wish for a substitute,, perhaps when we are feeling "off form", and nothing seems to go right for us. Perhaps when our health fails us, and we could do with a rest, but we have to soldier on and do our best, there is no replacement available for us.

Bible references (1) Hebrews 9:27
(2) Romans 5:8 (3) 1 Timothy 2: 5,6

There is another situation where we will all badly want a substitute. Death is the final whistle for all of us, and **the Bible warns us**
"We will then have to come face to face with God" (1)

In our most honest of moments we would all confess that we could do with a substitute then, because if God looks to closely at us then, there is not much, if any, hope for us

But that is not the end of the story. The Bible tells us that God has provided a Substitute. His Son, Jesus Christ. He suffered all the punishment that was due to us when he died on the cross at Calvary. He dealt with it once and for all there.

But He can only become our Substitute when we let him, by surrendering our life to Him. We must acknowledge our Sin, and invite Him into our lives, to stand in as our substitute. He wants to do this for you. He has done it for millions of people over the last two millennia; He will do it for you, today, if you will only ask him.

The Bible says
"Christ died for us while we were still sinners, and that is God's own proof of his love " (2)
"There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all" (3)

JB Curtis paraphrased MEW