

# 17. Underdog Meets Top Dog

In this chapter titled "Underdog Meets Top Dog," excitement builds as the Cubs reach the championship game, causing a surge in ticket demand from the Southern California deaf community. However, the limited capacity of the CSDR home field leads administrators to relocate the championship to John W. North High School, a venue that can accommodate thousands. The Cubs face Faith Baptist, a school with a strong conservative Christian background, promising a clash of identities.

Faith Baptist was established in 1963 and aims to provide a moral education alongside general studies, requiring students to engage in Bible study and prayer. Discipline is evident in their policies, from grooming standards to strict rules about language. The school maintains an affordable tuition of under \$8,000, attracting a diverse student body, including White, Latino, and Asian students—many of whom are of Filipino descent.

Coach Rob Davidson, who has led Faith Baptist's football team since 2006, balances coaching with a high-powered career in pharmaceuticals. His dedication is reflected in the team's successful decade, with a current record of 10-2 leading into the championship. Faith Baptist boasts a large roster and impressive athleticism, highlighted by standout players like six-foot-eight tight end and six-foot-three quarterback Luke Rasmussen. Their speed adds to their advantage, particularly with A.C. Swadling, dubbed "the Missile," known for his agility and tackling ability, and star running back Parker Mills, who balances work in a Malibu restaurant with his athletic commitments.

In contrast to the Cubs, who face challenges and a losing streak, Faith Baptist practices diligently throughout Thanksgiving week, keen to capitalize on their media-savvy opponents and determined to secure a decisive victory in this underdog versus top dog matchup. The chapter encapsulates the anticipation surrounding the championship game, setting the stage for a thrilling contest between two distinct cultures and philosophies in sports.