

MANOLIS TAMPAKAKIS



AGE: 17

COUNTRY: Greece

HOMETOWN: Athens

POSITION: Midfielder



STORY: Manolis is 17 years old and is very proud to represent his home country of Greece at the Unity Cup. He has been playing football for seven years and enjoys playing midfield. When he is not in school or doing his homework, Manolis plays football nearly every day. In addition to football and school, Manolis helps his mother around the house and enjoys spending time with his friends.

Manolis also serves as an assistant coach for a female football team in Athens where his sister, Vaso, is also a football player with Special Olympics. Vaso is not able to speak due to her disability, but Manolis tries very hard to help her in any way that he can. He assists her with her school work and always tries to understand her few words. He believes that if he helps her one day he will "hear her calling me."

Manolis likes that football is a team sport because he can work with his teammates to achieve victory. When he wins, he feels overcome with joy and freedom. His coaches say that he is a special person with a special heart who is spontaneous and full of energy that he always brings with him to Special Olympics events. In addition, Manolis is very dedicated to football. Rain or shine, he is always the first on the field waiting for training to start!

According to his coaches, Manolis serves as the spirit of his team. He always tries to empower his teammates to be better. He loves Special Olympics because it has allowed him to be part of a team, has given him the chance to make friends and the ability to see the world. Heading to Cape Town for the Unity Cup is his dream come true.