

MATTHEW MILLETT



AGE: 31

COUNTRY: U.S.A.

HOMETOWN: South Grafton, Massachusetts

POSITION: Fullback



STORY: Matthew has been playing soccer his entire life—for 26 of his 31 years. He is a fullback who is very talented both on the soccer field and off.

Matthew plays with Special Olympics Massachusetts and is currently on four different soccer teams in total. He uses his speed to dribble past defenders and loves being able to assist his teammates to score goals. Playing soccer makes him feel happy and he says that ultimately, his involvement in Special Olympics has given him the courage to be more outgoing and to make friends. He believes that through playing soccer with Special Olympics he has realized that playing sports is not about winning or losing, but about having fun.

Matt has worked hard his entire life to overcome language and other challenges, having various surgeries throughout his life. That has never stopped him as he's a very determined person. His biggest challenge growing up has been overcoming people's perception that because he has an intellectual disability that he is somehow not normal. He has had to prove that he is as deserving as anyone else to have the opportunity to play sports.

Matt's soccer skills are phenomenal, but he won the honor of competing in the Unity Cup not on skills alone. Matt is always the first to pass the ball to his teammates. He has incredible character and also helps mentor younger Special Olympics' athletes. Matt's coaches describe him as an outstanding leader. They say Matt is always putting others before himself—that he is a good good teammate with a positive attitude who can do anything he puts his mind to.

Matt is currently an athlete advisor on his local Special Olympics' board of directors and he also served on the Special Olympics Massachusetts Winter Games management team last year.

In addition to soccer, Matt also plays unified volleyball and softball. He enjoys walking, hiking and hanging out with his friends. He loves soccer and is excited to represent the USA in South Africa at the Unity Cup. Upon his return he and his Special Olympics Massachusetts teammates will be headed to play soccer at the 2010 USA National Games in Nebraska, July 18 – 23.