CHAPTER 1

At the edge of the field, Max strained at his leash, barking loudly. Frankie knew how he felt. This game was *really* close. St. Peter's School had a good team. Maybe even as good as Frankie's. The score remained zero–zero, so the pressure was building. Lots of parents, including

Frankie's, had come out to watch the game.

"Concentrate, team!" called Mr. Donald, their soccer coach. "Two minutes to go! Play to the final whistle."

Charlie had the ball in his gloves in the center of the goal, looking for someone to throw it to. He saw Frankie's friend Kobe and rolled it out to him.

"Pass it, Kobe!" called Louise.

Kobe neatly sidestepped with the ball as one of the St. Peter's players ran toward him. He kicked a looping pass to Louise. She managed to cushion the ball on her knee.

"Great!" said a voice from the side of the field. "Pass it to a *girl*."

Frankie shot a frown at his brother, Kevin, who was holding Max's leash. "She's better than you, any day of the week," he shouted back.

Kevin made a face. "Whatever."

"Hit me, Louise!" yelled Frankie.

Louise looked up. Two opponents rushed at her. She stabbed the ball with her toe, and it sailed perfectly between them to Frankie's foot.

"Go on, son!" shouted his dad.

Frankie turned and ran toward the goal. It was just him and the goalie, a giant kid who'd stopped every shot so far.

"Shoot, Frankie!" yelled Louise.

The goalie started moving out from the goal, spreading his arms wide.

"You can do it!" called Frankie's mom.

Frankie wondered what to do. Dribble the ball around the goalie, or try for the chip over his head? The boy seemed taller by the second. He'd have to go around him. No problem. Frankie stepped over the ball, and dropped his shoulder to go left. The goalie kept his eyes on the ball. Frankie darted right. He was through . . .

Argh!