

JOACHIM MASANNEK

*The Wild Soccer Bunch*



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This is a work of fiction. All names and characters  
are either invented or used fictitiously.

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Die Wilden Fussballkerle™ Joachim Masannek & Jan Birck

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## Hi *Wild Soccer Bunch* fans!

Almost a year has passed since the first book in the series, *Kevin the Star Striker*, was introduced. I hope you had a great year, played soccer, had a lot of fun, and learned some new things along the way.

I also had a great year. I played with the U.S. National Team in the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa. It was an incredible experience!

I know that a lot of you dream of playing in the World Cup. I truly believe that your dream can come true if you work hard. Remember, every soccer star was a kid once!

In soccer, as in life, you must be a good sport. You must respect your opponents and learn from your mistakes. Like the *Wild Soccer Bunch*, if you lose, you need to pick yourself up and try again. You must never lose hope and never ever give up!

Your Friend and Teammate,  
Landon Donovan





JOACHIM MASANNEK

*The Wild Soccer Bunch*

Book 2

**Diego, the Tornado**

Illustrations by Jan Birck



Sole  
BOOKS



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## The *Wild Soccer Bunch*



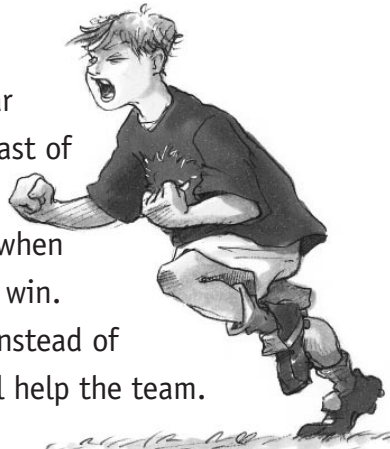
Ahem! Excuse me? My name is Diego. Diego Hernandez. Maybe you've heard of me.

Some people call me 'Asthma,' because I have asthma. Duh! But my friends call me 'the tornado.' Speaking of my friends – we're called the *Wild Soccer Bunch*. Here's the rundown on who's on the team:

Danny, the world's fastest midfielder, he rocks. He's always in a good mood, and if you ever need advice when the chips are down, Danny is *the* go-to guy. He has the wildest ideas, and his smile always saves him in a pinch. Even from being grounded. Listen – Danny is wild! But his best friend Kevin is even wilder.



Kevin, the master dribbler, star striker, and the quickest assist east of the Rockies, fears nothing and no one. He does what he wants when he wants. And all he wants is to win. Period. He'll even pass the ball instead of scoring the goal himself if it will help the team.



But he can be ruthless, too.

Just before the last game he threw Roger and Josh off the team. He said they were not good enough. Talk about a cold shot!

Tyler would never do anything like that.

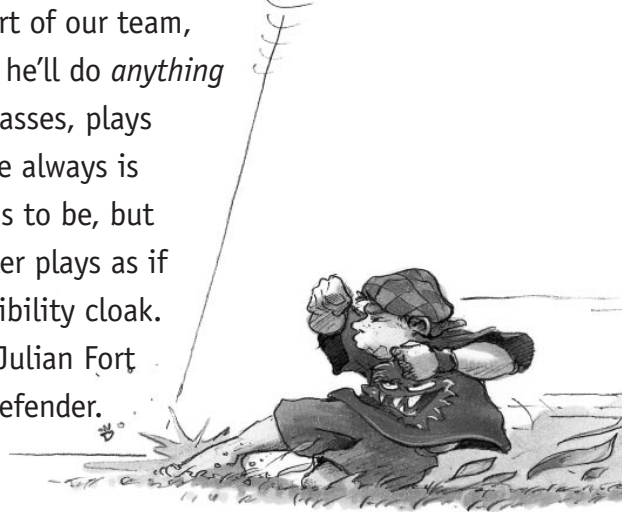
Tyler is Kevin's older brother, and he never gives up either.

But he's not a cutthroat.

He's our number 10, the heart of our team, and he'll do *anything*

for us. He cuts nifty passes, plays defense and attack. He always is exactly where he needs to be, but you don't see him. Tyler plays as if he is wearing an invisibility cloak.

Julian is different: Julian Fort Knox, our all-in-one defender.



If he's playing, it's like three more players are on the field. At least that's what our opponents think. They complain to the referee that Julian covers them on all four sides. They *swear* we have ten players on the field. But guess what? When the referee checks, there are only seven. Ha! It's just that Julian has possession of the ball most of the time and moves so fast, he's a blur on the field.

He'll play to Tyler, who, like Clint Dempsey, cuts a pass forward to the right wing. That's where Danny races along the sidelines, looking to Kevin to see who will score. And when he's fouled, Kevin drops to the ground, moaning, writhing in pain. But, if you look closely, you can see the grin on his face.

And that's where Alex comes in. Alex the cannon Alexander has the strongest kick in the world. But Alex doesn't say much. Actually, he doesn't talk

at all. Never has, not since I've known him, not even on the phone, not even to himself. But when he executes



a free kick or takes a shot at the goal, he flashes his famous silent grin and hurls the ball into the net. And sometimes the goalie flies in right along with it.

“Boom!” we all shout. And we shout “1-2-3 wild!” when he scores. The one shouting the loudest is Roger.



Roger, the hero. Roger plays soccer the way a blind man takes photographs. That’s what Kevin says and he’s right. But that’s not what matters. Even when Kevin threw him off the team, Roger stuck up for us. He showed real loyalty.

We had lost pretty much everything: the life-and-death match, our field, and our honor and pride. But then Roger got Larry, our coach, to come back to the team, and then he even scored the winning goal.

You see, even a player like Roger is important. We know that now. He is a loyal and irreplaceable friend, just like Josh, our superhero. Josh is Julian’s younger brother. He just turned six. Sure, he’s the youngest, but he was the one who saved us. Him and Sox – Kevin and Tyler’s dog, the one with ears so big he looks like a bat – he showed up at the last minute and chased Mickey the bulldozer away.

Dude, that was sick! Picture a 200-pound



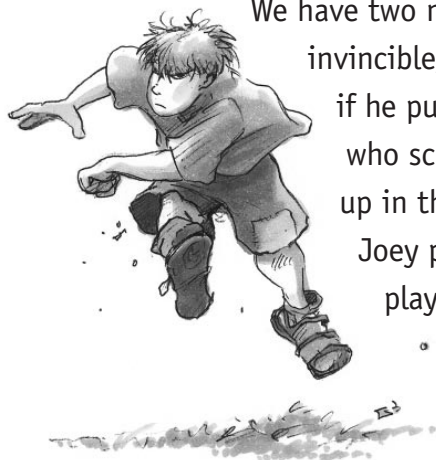


jellyfish jumping over a fence. Still makes us laugh just thinking about it! And ever since that day, we knew we belonged together.

Actually, I *don't* know that. I, Diego the left forward, the tornado... have asthma... and it gets worse every day. Especially since my dad moved out. Some day, it'll get so bad, they'll throw me off the team. You see, the competition never sleeps.



We have two new guys on the team: Kyle, the invincible, and Joey. Joey's so good it's as if he puts a spell on the ball. And anyone who scores a goal against Kyle will end up in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. Joey plays midfield for me when I can't play, because of the asthma. Well, that's just how it is. Not even Larry can fix asthma.



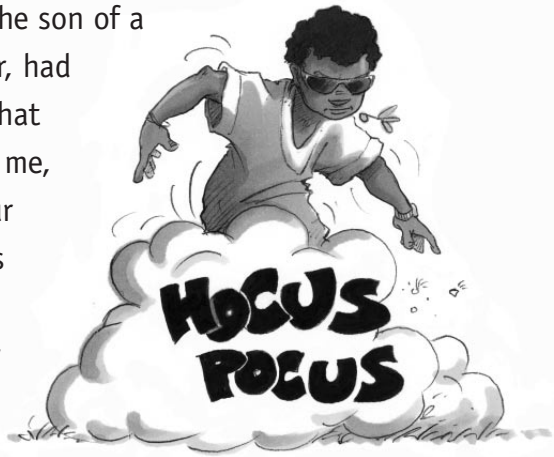


Larry is our coach. He's the best coach in the world and because he is, the *Wild Soccer Bunch* is the best soccer team in the world. I wouldn't want to play for any other team. 'Cause there's only one thing that makes the world go round: playing for the *Wild Soccer Bunch*.

But unfortunately, right now, my world is not spinning. Seriously. There are dangers lurking everywhere and they smack you right in the face when you least expect it. We learned that the hard way. And it was serious this time. So if you're reading this book, brace yourselves. This is not a kid's book. This is real; as real as life. Dangerous and wild.

It all began when a new student joined our class.

Fabio, the wizard, the son of a Brazilian soccer star, had moved to Chicago that spring. And believe me, this guy was not our friend. This guy was the enemy; he threatened our very existence.



And then poof!

Suddenly the *Wild Soccer Bunch* was no more. Suddenly the *Wild Soccer Bunch* was nothing, zilch, nada. Our opponents were none other than the *Furies*, and they snubbed us. Yes, you read that right. I'm talking about none other than the hugely successful youth club coached by real pros with ties to Major League Soccer!

How could we possibly measure up against them? We couldn't and so the *Wild Soccer Bunch* was about to be scattered to the seven winds and we'd never see each other again. We were alone.

Even our coach, Larry, had turned his back on us.

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#### JOACHIM MASANNEK

Joachim was born in 1960 and studied German and Philosophy in college. He also studied at the University of Film and Television and worked as a camera operator, set designer and screenwriter in films and television.

His children's book series *The Wild Soccer Bunch* has been published in 28 countries. As the screenwriter and director of the five *The Wild Soccer Bunch* movies, Joachim has managed to bring about nine million viewers into the theatres. He was the coach of the real *Wild Bunch Soccer* team and the father of two of the players, Marlon (Tyler) and Leon (Kevin).



#### JAN BIRCK

Jan was born in 1963 and is an illustrator, animation artist, art director (advertising, animation, CD-ROM's), cartoonist, and CD-ROM designer. Jan designs the *Wild Soccer Bunch* merchandising with Joachim. Jan lives in Munich with his wife Mumi and his soccer playing sons Timo and Finn.

HAVE YOU READ THE FIRST BOOK?  
**GET IT NOW!**



**THE WILD SOCCER BUNCH  
BOOK 1  
KEVIN the Star Striker**

When the last of the snow has finally melted, soccer season starts!

Kevin the Star Striker and the *Wild Soccer Bunch* rush to their field. They have found that Mickey the bulldozer and his gang, the *Unbeatables*, have taken over. Kevin and his friends challenge the *Unbeatables* to the biggest game of their lives.

Can the *Wild Soccer Bunch* defeat the *Unbeatables*, or will they lose their field of dreams forever? Can they do what no team has done before?

COMING SOON!



**THE WILD SOCCER BUNCH  
BOOK 3  
ZOE the Fearless**

Zoe is 10 years old, soccer-crazy, and spends each day dreaming of becoming the first woman to play for the U.S. Men's National Team. Her dad believes in her dream and encourages her to join the *Wild Soccer Bunch*. Even though Zoe would be the only girl on the team, she knows she could be their best player. But the *Wild Soccer Bunch* is not open-minded when it comes to welcoming new teammates, especially when they are girls...

Zoe's dad has a plan. He organizes a birthday tournament and invites the *Wild Soccer Bunch*. They present Zoe with a pair of red high heels, expecting her to make a fool of herself during the tournament. Zoe gladly accepts her gift. She wears the heels during the biggest game of her life, and proves that she's got what it takes to be a wild, winning member of the *Wild Soccer Bunch*.

# *The Wild Soccer Bunch* **JUNIOR CHAMPIONS CLUB**



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live to play!*



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