

69

Kyle and his parents were still on Jack's mind when Michael, Paul's Dad, offered a hand with the packing up. Michael was just like his son – unassuming features but with a shock of unruly, curly brown hair.

They worked together in a companionable silence for a few minutes before Michael spoke up.

“There's something you should know about Kyle's parents.”

Jack remained quiet, wondering what bombshell was coming down on him now.

“I wasn't going to say anything, but after your talk I got to thinking. I hadn't realised until now how important all this is to the kids, and that's what made me decide to bring it up.”

Jack nodded, giving Michael plenty of time.

“Mate, I can speak for many of the other parents when I say that the reason we don't come to many games is because of Kyle's Dad. He can be so ...,” Michael searched for the right words, “... obnoxious. He's constantly yelling at the players and slinging off at the ref, and it's not comfortable to be around, especially with our wives and youngsters there. I mean we all get excited from time, but that's way over the top. It's abrasive, it's unnecessary, and it's rude.”

Jack took a deep breath. He'd certainly heard Kyle's father yelling from time to time, but, like everything else, he took no notice when he was coaching.

“You know, Jack, it's a real shame, because parents aren't going to want their kids to play for this team. And I'm not the only one who's seriously looking at putting my son into another club next year.”

“Has this been a problem in previous seasons?”

“Sure. For the last two years. Nobody's said anything up to now. I mean, where do you start with this sort of thing?”

Jack knew he had to respond, and show a confidence he certainly didn't feel right then.

“Well, you start with me, I guess.”