

DEFENDER OF THE FAITH

Kubangila Kasanza Celva of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, is a great player on many teams.

By Richard M. Romney
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The attacker from the other team is dribbling toward the goal, fast. He seems certain to score. But then Celva catches up to him, matches him stride for stride, kicks the ball away, and races in the opposite direction.

“I’m a defender,” 12-year-old Celva explains. “It’s my job to stop the other team from scoring.”

Celva’s the kind of player you love to have on your side. He’s quiet but assertive, he’s ready to work hard, and he loves to see everyone on the team succeed. These are qualities that also make him a great part of some other teams—his church and his family. And so does his willingness to defend the truth.

Celva and Nephi

Celva’s favorite scripture is 1 Nephi 3:7: “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded.” As Nephi

did, Celva trusts in the Lord. “He will not ask me to do something without preparing a way for me to do it. He will strengthen me and send others to help me.”

Go and Do

“Listening to what we are taught about the gospel is important,” Celva says. “But it’s also important to do what we are taught.” He remembers his baptism and tries each day to use the gift of the Holy Ghost to make wise choices. He has just received the Aaronic Priesthood, looks forward to going to the temple someday to make additional covenants with the Lord, and plans to serve a full-time mission. He wants to set a good example for his brothers and be of service to his mother and father.

“I honor my mother and father by doing what they ask me to do and by keeping the commandments of our Heavenly Father,” he says. “As the

oldest child, I know it is important that I set a good example for my brothers, because what I do they are also likely to do.”

Staying Strong

Celva knows it’s important to work hard, both in sports and in the gospel. Family and personal prayer, family



WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Celva is a name with significance. It combines the names of Celva’s father, Celestin, and his

mother, Valerie. “It reminds me of how much they wanted to be together, to create a happy family,” Celva says.

His brothers names are also significant. Nathan, age 7, is named for a wise man in the Bible. Beni, age 4, means “blessed.” And although the two-year-old’s name is Celestin Jr., after his father, for now everyone calls him Le Petit (“the little one”).

MORE ONLINE

To see a map of Kinshasa and to watch a video of Celva singing a hymn and bearing his testimony, go to www.liahona.lds.org.



and personal scripture study, family home evening—all are part of his regular routine. He has a testimony of the Word of Wisdom and knows that some things are good to eat while others are bad. “Athletes shouldn’t drink beer,” he says emphatically.

A True Defender

As the Church moves into the future, it is good to know there are strong young men like Celva who are eager to do what is right. “I know my Heavenly Father lives, that Jesus Christ is real, and that Joseph Smith was the prophet who restored the gospel to the earth,” Celva says. “I have that testimony and will always defend the Church in every way.” ■



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