beats England, 1-1

Try convincing the U.S. team and its fans there wasn’t a winner in the 1-1 draw with mighty England.

"We’ll take more out of a draw than they will," said U.S. goalkeeper Tim Howard, the hero of the match. "They’re going to feel like they should have won the game."

Facing the Three Lions in the World Cup for the first time in 60 years, the United States rallied and then hung on for an instant boost in confidence that they could advance to the second round.

Clint Dempsey became only the second American to score in two World Cups, getting the tying goal in the 40th minute on a blunder by goalkeeper Robert Green. Howard made six saves, withstanding a second-half barrage by Wayne Rooney and his celebrated teammates.

"I think a lot of us came off the field satisfied with this result, but maybe a little disappointed we didn’t get more out of the game," U.S. star Landon Donovan said.

Steven Gerrard put England ahead in the fourth minute, blowing past Ricardo Clark to beat Howard from short range. Dempsey tied it when Green fumbled his 25-yard shot that skipped off the ground twice, yet another mistake in a long line by English goalkeepers.

"Mentally we’re strong enough to get over it and as a goalkeeper these things happen," Green told

Next match

- United States
  - vs. Slovenia at
    - Johannesburg, 7 a.m. Friday
  - TV: ESPN, cable Channel 35
  - Radio: KFXR 1080 AM

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has traveled farther in his 25 years than most people do in a lifetime.

“If I never went to Clark, I would be lost somewhere,” Brown said. “I wouldn’t know what’s next, I wouldn’t be happy. I’m happy now.

“I’ve got goals. I’ve got things I want to accomplish.”

Yet we’re getting ahead of ourselves. Let’s start with the beginning of Brown’s story, which was first chronicled by The Columbian in 2007.

Brown grew up in north Portland in a family with eight kids, raised by a single mom and a grandmother. It’s the kind of place and the kind of situation where hope often goes to die.

“It’s a violent neighborhood, a lot of shootings going on,” he said. “I was driving home at night and got shot at. You can’t really avoid it; I would say you have to be lucky. I could have fallen to the streets a long time ago.”

Instead, when he was three years out of high school, Brown started showing up for open gym sessions at Clark. He caught the attention of the coaches; he eventually enrolled in school.

Brown made the team for the 2006-07 season, playing sparingly for the Penguins. After the season, his grades slipped, and he was dismissed from school for one quarter. When he wanted to return, his financial aid had been eliminated because of his poor grades.

Which brings us to the turning point in the journey of Markeith Brown. Because the funny thing about tales of hope is that there’s often an angel involved, and for Brown that angel was Nancy Heidrick.

“We get to make a personal impact on people,” said Heidrick, an assistant director of financial aid at Clark. “We are really on the front line; if they don’t have money, they aren’t going to be here.

“I told Markeith, ‘You need to go to college. You have to show your family it can be done. You’re a trailblazer for them.’”

Heidrick found some financial aid for Brown. She helped set out an academic plan for him. She helped nurture him through two years as a part-time student while he bolstered his grades.

“He did everything I asked him to do,” Heidrick said. “He put himself in my hands. He did the things he had to do, and he took responsibility for it. He’s a wonderful role model for his family.”

Brown said: “I thought I was done; I thought it was over. But I had somebody who was helping me — that was Nancy.

“Nancy, man, I couldn’t do it without her. She not only helped me find the money to get through, she also built me up with knowledge. She made me feel like I could get through.”

Isn’t that the whole point of life? The whole point of college or business or athletics? You try and you struggle and, if you’re lucky, somebody has your back when you need it.

Because sometimes hope isn’t enough. Sometimes, you need to take a 10-minute car ride to the other side of a river in order for that hope to flourish.

“It’s like a whole different side,” Brown said of his daily journey from his home to Clark College. “It’s changed my life. It’s opened my mind up. I feel lucky.”

This year, Brown took a full class load, making him eligible again for basketball. He improved on the court as the season went along, earned a starting spot, and received an offer from Greenville, which competes at the NCAA Division III level.

“I told him, ‘Your degree, that’s your ticket to get on the train. That can be your ticket to IBM or Nike,’ ” Arnold said.

Brown, who plans to major in marketing, has even bigger ideas.

“I see myself owning my own business or businesses,” he said. “I’m fascinated by the fact that somebody can run something. I would be a good boss, a good manager.”

“I got it from my mom. I see her and all the work she put in. She said we don’t have to be superstars; she just wants us to be productive citizens.”

And, in the end, that is something worth hoping for.

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