

Hey Guys,

I'm writing this note to you to thank you for participating in the Running and Conditioning sessions over the last 5 weeks. I also would like to share with you what I ended the last session with. A talk about DEDICATION, DRIVE, and DETERMINATION.

My Dad was a High School Basketball, Baseball, and Football coach and always had me, my brother, and sister at the courts and fields at a very early age. I've been involved with sports for a long time and have learned a few things from it that I carry through in all aspects of my life.

The first lesson is DEDICATION. You need to be dedicated to your sport in order for you to excel. By being involved in the running sessions, you have shown to me and yourself that you are dedicated to prepare yourself to being in shape for your Fall sport. You are now at the age where preparation will be key in anything you do. Chances are that if you dedicate yourself to your sport, school work, friendships, etc., you will excel in those parts of your life and be a better person for it. I always go by the saying I heard from Juma Ikanga, a world famous marathon runner who successfully raced in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He stated, "the will to win, means nothing without the will to prepare." The American women's marathoner, Deena Kastor, came into the Olympic stadium last Sunday after being in 18th place at mile 15 and ended up winning the bronze medal. Something she wasn't expected to win. She had tears in her eyes during the last 800 meters because she realized at that time, that all the hard work and dedication to her sport over the past several years finally paid off. She didn't just train for a few months for this. This preparation had taken place over several years. She had "the will to prepare" which eventually brought her to the Bronze medal. Keep this story in mind when you think you don't need to work at something because you are already good at it. Remember that there is always someone out there that is working harder than you, and someday, because of their effort, may be better than you. Therefore, dedicate yourself to everything you do if you want to get better at it. If you plan on playing at 100%, then plan on practicing at 100% also.

The next theme is DRIVE. You need to be hungry to do your best. You should want to win. You should want to do well on a test. You should want to give it your all to help your team. Try to find something in your life that reminds you of how much you want something. It can be in the form of something you read, a movie you saw that had a special message, a good luck charm, etc. I actually use the chain that I wear around my neck that was once my Dad's as a reminder to me to keep going strong even when things are not going so well. He never gave up on me and it's that simple reminder that tells me not to give up either. I also wear the yellow Lance Armstrong Livestrong band around my wrist to remind me of the DRIVE that Lance had in him to overcome cancer several years ago and eventually become the most successful and famous bicyclist ever. He could have easily called it quits at that time but the DRIVE in him overcame everything else. So find something in your life that will help motivate you to be the best you can be. It is out there. You just need to find it.

Finally, DETERMINATION. This can take place in the form of your actual effort out there on the field, court, rink, classroom, wherever it may be. If there is a loose ball on the court, give it your all to get to it. If you need to beat someone to the ball to score a goal or provide a great pass, or make a steal from your opponent, then give it your all to help your team out. Don't let them or yourself down.

In summary, I would like you to know that no matter what happens, if you show DEDICATION, DRIVE, AND DETERMINATION in things that you are passionate about, you will have no regrets about the effort you gave. If you try out for a team and don't make it, don't give up. Keep working hard and enjoy the sport as best you can. Even Michael Jordan got cut from his High School basketball team. If things don't work out, then you know deep in your heart that you

gave it your best effort. That is something nobody can take away from you.

Finally, always be appreciative of the effort your parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches, family and friends give to you. They bring you to practices, pay for your uniforms, pick you up when you are down, and support you in all your activities. I remember my Mom being at every single sporting event I was in no matter how cold or rainy it was. Every once in awhile, say thanks to them for all they do.

I really enjoyed these 5 sessions because you guys were a lot of fun to be around. So keep your DEDICATION, DRIVE, and DETERMINATION going strong. While you're doing that, have fun with your teammates, schoolmates, and friends. Good luck in your Fall sporting season and always show good sportsmanship whether you win or lose, and enjoy the new school year!

Coach Bruce