

Team: Let's Get With It!

It's the end of the year, it's nearly time for freedom, and it's easy to get antsy. I get that. Still, it is important to show respect to everyone—students, staff, teachers, family and friends—and to everything—learning environments, your grades, and your own future success.

For this reason, I ask that you reflect on the last few days, especially as we race to the finish. As any good athlete knows, the last few minutes of a game, race, or competition are crucial for success. A sprinter doesn't go all out to walk the last 20 yards of a 100-meter sprint. A football player doesn't lackadaisically dribble a football a few feet instead of kicking a field goal skillfully over the crossbar. And a mini-golf player doesn't start aimlessly swinging hard to explode his or her points and lose the competition. Such actions would be ridiculous.

The same is true in the classroom.

No, you might not be in the classroom with the same enthusiasm as you would be on a team. No, you didn't *choose* to be here and some would claim that you are "forced." And no, there isn't much more work to left to do—for some of you. Still, we are a team, and we must work together.

Your team extends far beyond your 4th period classroom, but let's start there.

You have each other. Positive, sweaty, grunt-provoking work will spur each other on, and you can reach heights to excellence. Practically, you can avoid summer school, maintain eligibility for fall sports, and, for those already doing alright or even excelling, boost your GPA for eventual prospective colleges or careers—something looming closer than you think. Team members firmly shout words of motivation to each other in the heat of the moment. Your respectful actions and diligence to work when you are utterly exhausted speak volumes. Stay with it. Be the silent shouters of encouragement. Don't settle to share contagious apathy. Your "team" will falter, and those who deeply desire to excel and focus will become injured and handicapped.

You have your parents. And you are here for a reason. Your parents *could* have opted for home school, private school, or online education, but instead, they brought you here to Summerville High School in faith. Faith that you would have the best education possible, and faith that, despite their own circumstances, you are at the best place possible to learn. Your parents are not only your fans, but your own, most intimate team. Don't disappoint them, even if they, at times, may disappoint you. Be the best you possibly can be and strive to excel. Remember those who care about you and *why* you are here. Don't waste away and take a nap on the infield or pick daisies instead of kicking a soccer ball.

You have your teachers—and we truly care about you! Consider us your coaches. Don't drain our energy with refusal to participate and compete, but encourage us to be the best we can be by inputting the work we ask of you. When we discipline, we show that we truly believe you are better than your actions; we haven't given up. When we put hours into our lesson plans we believe that you are capable of not only a good game, but winning! We want you to reach new heights and grow! Your positive response allows us to mirror your own attitude and shine, and you'll be incredibly blessed! You'll win!

English may not be your forte. So? Being asked to play goalie when you are a forward might not be either. But do it for the people that surround you. Be a team. Excel. Encourage! And, when you do this,

You can't lose.

Directions: Write a one-page letter to a "team member". This could be someone specific (like a classmate who wants to work hard, a teacher, a parent, or a staff member) or it could be someone in general.

If you aren't finishing the "game" strong, explain specifically how and why you have not been excelling. Write about the consequences that ensue, not just for you and for others. Address how you will change, with concrete examples. And finally, explain the positive consequences (both in the short and long run) of such change.

If you are playing the "game" strong, write a letter to a team member encouraging them on (and keeping things positive, like a fan on the sidelines) or write a thank-you letter to those who have supported and encouraged you along the way. Write about the positive consequences that have resulted because you have kept your head in the game, and write how you plan to continue to (in any classes) these last few days. Finally, set goals for yourself as the years continue. Where do you see yourself after high school? How has "staying in the game" helped you see better sight of these goals?