



2011 WRITING COMPETITION

Coach of Life

by Ryan Engel

Student - money winner

Wilson Central High School

Wilson County

At the end of my seventh grade year I was introduced to the new head football coach of West Wilson Middle School. His name was Heath Springer, and he was a teacher in the behavior class. He changed my life by the values that he tried to teach to the entire team. Those values were that we were a team, and a team is similar to a family. He also taught us to take responsibility for our actions. Last but certainly not least, he taught us to respect everyone, especially adults.

Being a team is not just a group of people who wear the same uniform. It is your second family and you should treat everyone on the team as you would a family member. If the group of people treats the team as a family we could beat anybody. However, to beat another team we could not be at war within our own team. No one is better than the person next to us in the locker room.

Responsibility was a large part of being a person. If we did something wrong, we needed to accept the fact that we made the mistake and work hard to make sure it never happened again. For example, if a player were to have left his playbook on the floor, he wanted the person who left it to admit that they had left it. He also wanted us to take responsibility for not doing schoolwork and if a teacher sent him an email about a player acting up or not turning in assignments, that player would have a punishment to help influence the player into doing the right things. He taught us that responsibility is second to the most important value, which was respect.

Coach Springer firmly believes that you should always show respect to a person. Even if that person is younger than you, older than you, or the same age as you, always show respect to that person. He taught us to show respect by saying ma'am/sir when talking to people. Also, yeah or okay were not acceptable, the correct response was yes/no ma'am/sir.

I will always remember Coach Springer, for what he did for not only for me but for everyone he coached. He relentlessly pushed us to become a family, take responsibility, and show respect to everyone. He said one several times that, "We may not win a single game, but by God I will teach you to become gentlemen." This stuck out because it shows his attitude about how people should act and it translated to us. He is to this day one of the most influential people I have ever had the pleasure to meet.