

WMU FOOTBALL

All it is going to take for us to achieve our goals is to perform well enough to get it done. Performance is the key. The coaching talent is here and the players' talent is here, so all we have to do is pull together and perform up to our ability for 9 plus Fridays.

Winning is not complicated, people complicate it. When you completely buy into this belief, we will together eliminate any need for excuses for losing, because we won't lose many. First of all, just being good enough is not good enough for us. A passionate desire to be the best is what has to drive us to perform like a champion. It is within the ability of this team. Winning by accident doesn't appeal to me because it never happens often enough in one season to get you into the playoffs. Having the talent to win only provides us with a chance to win, and that's all. It is taking advantage of that talent and utilizing it to perform well enough throughout the season that is going to be what will ultimately make us all successful. Again, performance is the key.

I'm very confident when I say that everyone on this team thinks he is talented enough to make a winning contribution to our season. So in actuality, all we have to do is control everything we can that produces winning performances. If we are as talented as we think we are, then all we have to do is develop and maintain a winning level of motivation. Now, why is motivation so important? **Because motivation controls performance!** Teams that are talented enough and motivated enough, perform well enough to win. Those that are talented enough but are not highly motivated don't perform well enough to be successful. There is no such thing as a poor player. They are all good; some are just better than others. Therefore, when everything else is close to being equal, the most motivated teams win. This psychological edge drives everything that it takes to perform at a winning level.

Winning is not complicated, People complicate it!

The one thing I learned a long time ago is winning motivation comes from within. That deep desire to excel was implanted a long time ago. More often than not, it came from the home. It didn't come from a reward; it came from either Mom or Dad, a strong family influence, or in some cases, a negative environment. That negative environment wasn't used as a tool to blame for failure, but as an inner force to push toward the development of a superior attitude that would ultimately develop a winning level of motivation.

Now I'm getting to what I really believe. **There are three things that drive winning motivation.** 1. Attitude 2. Attitude 3. Attitude Do you get the message? Attitudes are critical because they directly control levels of motivation. Why do I say this? Because I've never coached an athlete with a poor attitude who was consistently highly motivated; but in contrast, I've coached many who, due to their attitudes were extremely motivated. consequently, once they could define and make a commitment, all the other decisions were easy. They lived their commitments.

Attitudes are nothing more than habitual ways of thinking. They are conditioned ways of responding to a stimulus. What you think of how you react is all controlled by your attitudes. People don't have good attitudes because they succeed. They succeed because

of their good attitudes. They succeed because of the way they think, and because of the way they prioritized their goals.

I will talk a lot about character. Good, winning character represents an accumulation of many positive attitudes. Poor character people have poor attitudes. **Good character people have good attitudes and they aren't always the most gifted.** They just play better anyway!

The final link to this whole thought is recognizing what control attitudes. It has always been my belief that attitudes are controlled by choice. **The greatest power we all have is the power of choice.** The power to determine what we allow to enter our minds is the formation of our attitudes.

The power to decide who is important to us- is a choice!

The power to decide what is important to us- is a choice!

The power to align priorities - is a choice!

The power to pull together- is a choice!

The power to care about a teammate- is a choice!

The power to be unselfish- is a choice!

The power to want to be held accountable- is a choice!

The power to play smarter football- is a choice!

The power to play tougher football- is a choice!

The power to play better-conditioned football- is a choice!

The power to make a commitment, then act upon it- is a choice!

The power to only allow positive things to enter your mind- is a choice; the greatest choice we all have!

These are just a few of the many choice we all have the opportunity to make that don't cost a dime! All it costs is the amount of time it takes to prioritize what it is you want out of life, then the wisdom and self-discipline to make the right choices!

WOLVES formula for success:

1st- Make the right choices

2nd- Form the right attitudes

3rd- Develop the right level of motivation

4th- Perform well enough to win

5th- A championship team

Smarter/Tougher/Better Conditioned

In working toward setting goals and objectives as well as organizing a philosophical approach for a football team for many years now, I believe in what I'm about to put down on paper more today than ever before. Why? The more I experience everything that takes place in today's game, the easier it is to define why some teams succeed while others fail.

The number one thing we have to do is play smart football. We cannot beat our opponents and ourselves on the same day. We've got to boil the game down to where they have to beat us physically.

It isn't a matter of being better than your opponent every week anymore- it is a matter of playing smarter. There are statistics on turnover ratios will validate the importance of this.

Teams with a turnover advantage of plus one = 67% win

Teams with a turnover advantage of plus two= 82% win

Teams with a turnover advantage of plus three= 90% win

Teams with a turnover advantage of plus four=93% win

Teams with a turnover advantage of plus five= 95% win

Teams with a turnover advantage of plus 6= 100% win

NOTE: teams with a turnover advantage of any kind won 79% of the games played.

Another way to really improve this smart football phase of the game is **become a great take away team.** We've got to become more aggressive in creating the turnover. Another real edge could be gained if we could add the "must score" mentality to the take away. When a team returned a pass interception or fumble for a touchdown, that team won 72% of the games played. **We must be aggressive when we take the ball away.**

The penalty factor is also a phase of smart football, though it isn't as glaringly critical as the give-away/takeaway ratio in determining the outcome of a game or a season.

We must not complicate our efforts to win. There are no excuses for false starts, neutral zone infractions, delay of game penalties and defensive offsides. You never know which penalty is going to stop a drive or keep one going for the opponent. All penalties can hurt you, but pre-snap penalties are the worst because they are not consistent with teams that play smart football.

Now that we are all on the same page in believing how important playing smart football is and how much of a contribution it will make to our season, we should gain a better understanding of how important it is to become a tougher team as well. A team's mental and physical toughness has a lot to do with how smart they can play.

Tougher

First off, a football team's toughness goes way beyond their willingness to make contact. When a team is a truly tough team, they play up to their talent level and beyond, consistently throughout the season. They don't need the inspirational play to take place early in the game to all the sudden ignite them to a more intense confident level of play. They start out at that level each week and only get better because of the smart plays they are able to make. **Players who think they are tough players because they can really hit are missing the point. You have to be tough enough to make the big play in the critical time of the game-** such as the big interception, the big strip that creates the fumble, the big, tough catch in a crowd, the tough run on third and three, the difficult, touch throws for touchdowns, just as you get hit. Players and teams that can eliminate penalties in the very critical times in a game are demonstrating a form of toughness that goes way beyond just hitting someone. Almost all

players will hit you, some better than others, but they will all hit. To really distinguish yourself as tough, you must go way beyond the contact definition of toughness.

Ask yourself this: How tough are you when one play you knock the hell out of a guy and on the very next play you give up a touchdown pass because you blow a coverage? You aren't very tough at all!

Where do you develop this toughness? In the off-season program, the running program, and during training camp. In other words, you work your butt off in every phase of the game without concern for how much time it takes, how much effort you have to put in, or what sacrifices you have to make. You don't bitch about it, you take pride in the fact that the price you are paying is greater than those who are trying to beat you each week, or who want to take your spot on the roster each day. Sooner or later you, the individual player, and you, the team, are going to be held responsible; if you aren't tough enough, you aren't tough enough. **It will ultimately show individually and collectively.**

This attitude of toughness will not happen by accident. It will happen when you make it happen. It will happen when the leadership steps up and shuts up on the "bitcher", the belly acher that is always looking to move the accountability to someone else. It will happen when you work through fatigue, bumps and bruises, long practice routines, meetings, hot and humid days, repetitious drills, and emotional setbacks. It will happen when you are truly enough to care about someone else as much as you care about yourself. It will happen when you trust your leadership. This tough attitude must come from within this team right now. **It can and will become a WOLVES personality trait.** Now is the time for each and every one of you to step up and assume their share of the responsibility for this team.

The Wolves won't care who we play, the Wolves won't care where we play, the Wolves won't care when we play, **the Wolves will only care about how we play!** We will develop into a team that not only plays hard, but also plays a smart and truly tough brand of football. It will include a "finish every play attitude," well beyond that of any opponent. **WE will take the definition of toughness way beyond our self-imposed limits.**

Let me summarize the Wolves toughness philosophy by saying a true WOLVES football team is one that plays as if they have already gained the advantage of a big momentum swing all the time. This has to be the desired personality trait of our team. Momentum is trust, momentum is confidence, momentum is belief- momentum is a smart, tough attitude that is reflected in how we play.

Momentum is not coincidence. Momentum is the direct result of everyone exercising their minds and emotions together as one team, meeting after meeting, walk through after walk through, practice after practice, play after play, game after game, and season after season. Many of you have already invested several years into developing what I am talking about. Why not go ahead and complete the crusade by truly doing everything you can to become a smarter, tougher, player and team. This process will elevate each and every one of you to the highest level you've ever performed.

We cannot sit back and wait for our opponents to suddenly inspire us to play smarter, tougher, and harder football during a game when that level of performance exists within us all prior to kick off.

Better conditioned

In contrast to the past, it is very difficult to out-work and out-condition an opponent during the offseason. Today everyone is investing a lot more time and effort in their off-season routines. There was a time when players used training camp to get prepared for the season by practicing themselves into shape. Now, there are so much more to gain by playing better and longer, the odd guy out is the player not talented enough or not dedicated enough to properly prepare in the offseason. Another dimension has also been added to the offseason programs. Players must continually strive to do their jobs better or someone else will be doing it for them!

You must recognize that it is **critical to strive to gain an edge at this time**. Why? A number of times I have had players come off the field and state their opponent was really sucking for air. This occurred as early as the middle of the third quarter. This in itself indicates to me that it is **still possible to be better than the best** if we continue to strive to be among the upper echelon in offseason and preseason preparation.

Our philosophy is based upon developing stamina that will allow us to work at a tempo that is superior to our opponents, and at a the same time, recover to play a quick explosive level of football on Friday. **If you don't develop this deeper level of stamina, your number one concern is being fresh enough to play- not playing better.**

As the long season goes on, you wear down, you don't get better you get by! You don't want to be the player who has to substitute himself out at a critical time during a game because you need a rest. You want your opponent to be that guy because **you are physically whipping his butt!** We must win the fourth quarter!

I realize the reason the great teams are stronger second-half teams could be due to the fact they are the better teams period! Just remember this: great teams played other great teams on their way to post-season competition. Therefore, each team demonstrated excellent stamina against the best as well. Another factor to consider is these teams could have been backing off in the fourth quarter because they already had a dominating lead. **The fact still remains, they were strong second half teams that played beyond a normal 9 game schedule to get where they ended up.** We must continue to strive to be the best-conditioned team in the league, and **there is no easy way.**

Setting priorities in life is critical in everything you do. You are competing with good players and most of them want to be just as successful as you. We all want the same rewards, but to ensure you have a shot at success, you must be willing to pay the price in advance.

Remember, if you aren't paying the price right now to be the best conditioned athlete you have the ability to be, you won't be by the time we line up and play our opener. There are always a few who won't pay the price, but want to reap all the rewards. They just want someone else's contribution to make the difference.

WE ALL HAVE TO BELIEVE THE TIME IS NOW!!!

Talent has always superseded conditioning, but when it comes down to being very close, the players who best exemplify our Philosophy-Smarter-Tougher-Better Conditioned- will be the players who succeed.

Commitment puts order in life.
Commitment establishes values.
Commitment sets your priorities.
Commitment tests all your skills.
Commitment makes everything you're doing worthwhile.

There will be a decisive moment- a point of no return when you decide whether or not you're going to make this deep commitment. The decision may be a very hard one for some of you to make, but if you do make this commitment as a team, a lot of other things will fall into place and make sense:

1. You will become more focused. Nothing else will be as important to you. You will not drift; you will maintain self-discipline!
2. Your time will become more purposeful. You will become less tolerant of those who want to distract you. You will lead rather than follow.
3. You will rally people to your cause. Your own personal energy and drive will become more visible to your teammates and opponents.

You will draw people to your cause, to our cause. You will become a leader!

To a large extent, **you are**-a team is- **what you believe**. A team can do what they sincerely believe they can do. It is time to start believing. In order to be able to follow through and endure versus the setbacks that do occur and will occur, you must have a deep belief in yourself and your teammates. This is the only chance we have.

Somewhere along the way, you have to start thinking of yourself and your teammates as more than just another competitor. You have to **see yourself and your teammates as winners!** Your self-image has to be strong, positive, confident, and optimistic before you can beat the best on a consistent basis.

The cart doesn't come before the horse! You don't beat the best then develop the self-image and confidence that makes it happen. You develop the self-image and confidence by trusting yourself, your teammates and coaching staff, then the wins will come. The wins don't create self-images, they only reinforce them!

Winning is a habit that is only attained through physical and mental effort. Nothing will replace this kind of deep commitment.

Players and teams with well-developed self-images are standouts because they begin to live their self-portraits. They carry with them a clear, fully realized, vivid image of who they are now, blended with what they want to be in the future. There is nothing wrong with wanting to be a great team as long as we all know what has to be done. This is where all winning images develop!

We can expect to beat anyone we play! Why, because your coaching staff and most of you have made the commitments necessary to get it done! If there is a mental block, we get over it by doing it! **Accept the fact it is going to be tough, then do it anyway!** The odds may be against us when you evaluate past statistics, but past numbers only evaluate past actions. They don't control future performances. Everything will be based upon what we do in preparation now and then how we take advantage of that preparation.

Performance is not based upon the odds. Performance changes the odds, and that is why we can never believe the odds are against us!

IT IS TIME! WHY NOT THE WOLVES?

“There are no secrets to success: don’t waste time looking for them. Success is the result of perfection, hard work, learning from failure, loyalty to those for whom you work and persistence. “

-General Colin Powell