

What Do You Say to the Team?

The talk Ohio State University Head Coach Jim Tressel gave his team January 3, 2003 (20 minutes prior to kick-off). The game was to decide the national championship between Ohio State and the number one ranked University of Miami Hurricanes.*

Men, tonight you embark upon the last portion of a journey that you started 12 months ago when we walked off the field after the bowl game. Part of the journey involved some of our friends leaving us for various reasons to go their separate ways. But those of you who remain are a part of something special here at Ohio State University. You stayed for a reason.

You stayed on because you care about the school, what it stands for, your teammates, and yourselves! All of you recognize that you are a part of something special here tonight. You recognize that you've come a long way from last January. I encourage you to savor it. Absorb this moment and seize it! Embrace it and take it the direction that YOU want to go.

There comes a point in each persons life when he/she asks himself: HOW DO I WANT TO BE REMEMBERED? Reality is so few people have the chance that you have tonight. You have the chance to effect the answer to that question. The moment is at hand. It is not about tomorrow. It is not about yesterday. It is not about what you did ten minutes ago. But part of your future and how you'll be remembered will be shaped BY YOU over the next three and half hours! Look around this room and look at the person next to you. How do you want that guy to remember you? How do you want him to remember the way you played in this game? How do you want your parents, family, and friends to remember your performance on this night? Will you be remembered as ordinary or extraordinary?

Thirty years from now when you have your team reunion you'll see many of these faces again and you'll shake hands. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to grasp the hand of that teammate 30 years from now and you look down at each other's hand and you see a giant ring on the finger? You'll reminisce and you'll soak up the common bond that you have with your teammates that can never be broken.

The coaches have prepared you for this game. The trainers have prepared you for this game. You've prepared yourselves for this game. But there are several things to remember when you take the field:

1. Play with heart. No matter what happens, we don't let up!
2. Play with passion. For many of you this is your last game as a Buckeye. But even for the underclassmen, do not take this situation for granted. Although you earned the right to be here, don't assume you'll be back. Play it as if it were your last hurrah. **PLAY EVERY SINGLE DOWN LIKE IT'S THE PLAY THAT WILL**



SAVE THE GAME! EACH PLAY MUST BE A WINNING PLAY. As the game goes on each play adds up to a winning performance.

3. Play within yourselves. Remember what you've been taught and play within that. So often teams lose games because guys start playing outside what they've been asked to do. Trust your mates and know they have your back.
4. Have fun! Relish this moment. Two teams have a shot at this each year. That means an awful lot of young men will go through life wondering what it would have been like to be in your shoes. Enjoy this, men! Don't be afraid to win!
5. PLAY LIKE CHAMPIONS TONIGHT! Play with the champion's heart, mind, spirit, & attitude. OWN THE CHAMPIONSHIP, MEN! CLAIM IT! OWN IT! BE IT!

DON'T LET ANYONE TAKE THIS MOMENT AWAY FROM YOU! NOT THE PRESS! NOT THE FANS! NOT THE MEDIA! AND CERTAINLY NOT THE MIAMI HURRICANES!!!! GO OUT THERE TONIGHT AND SHOW THE WORLD WHAT OHIO STATE FOOTBALL IS ALL ABOUT!

WE TALK ABOUT THE TRADITION THAT EXISTS HERE! WE TALK ABOUT GREAT MEN SUCH AS HAYES, KERN, GRIFFIN, PACE, & PAUL BROWN. WE TALK ABOUT THE COLORS. WE TALK ABOUT SCRIPT OHIO! YOU'RE NOT ALONE ON THAT FIELD, MEN! THE GHOSTS OF OHIO STATE PAST WILL BE WITH YOU!

All season long we've talked about what it takes to be considered truly extraordinary. What it takes to be considered great! There are people in this world who are afraid to be great! They're afraid to be champions only because they are afraid of the work and commitment required to be in the champions' pantheon!

BUT NOT YOU! LOOK AT YOUR COLORS! LOOK AT YOUR HELMETS AND ABSORB WHAT IT IS TO BE A PART OF THE SPECIAL FRATERNITY OF OHIO STATE FOOTBALL PLAYERS! ABSORB THE TRADITION! PLAY FOR THE TRADITION! PLAY FOR YOURSELVES!

GO OUT THERE AND BE CHAMPIONS! BE CHAMPIONS AT OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY!

*Final Score: Ohio State 31, Miami 24 in double overtime.

