

Where?

That is a good question that can take so many different paths. We can answer it in many different ways about many different places so I want you to think about these different kinds of places. The past, the present and the future, the physical locations and the places that exist only in your mind. Places that you share with those around you and places that are only your own. Good places and bad places. Wrestling can help take you almost anywhere. Places that you want to be and places that you need to be.

Where have we been? Where has our great sport taken us? Where did we go that we have never been before? Where are we at now and where are we headed in the future? The possibilities are endless.

First think about where you were. Some of you never wrestled or even thought about it, some of you had wrestled a great deal and others got drafted. But we all ended up in involved in the mat game. You found yourselves in the practice room and then on the competition mat. Both places are pretty scary and I'm sure you wondered if that was where you belonged. Well if you look where you are tonight your presence here confirms that you were in the right place.

Where were we before? In the past we have been to the top and I have told you what a great place that was to be and how I longed for you to get there too. That was before, that was the past.

Look at where we are now. You all went places you have never been before. Some of you did it alone and all of you did it together. You got to places you had never been before

and you got to share it with your buddies, that makes it a great place to be.

First as a team you got to enjoy a winning season on the mat, none of you had been in that place before. You all got a Team District Championship Medal, none of you ever had one of those before. You got to wrestle in a Team Regional match, another new place to be. You got to start the climb up the hill that leads to the places this team visited in the past, you got a little preview of what is possible if you know where you are going.

In the past we were well represented as the season rolled into March, but lately we haven't had a full car making that drive to the east. That was then, now first car is full and we needed to add another to get us to where we are going. Last year there was one on the big trip, now there are four. How many of you are there going to be next season?

Freshmen and sophomores you need to decide where it is that you are going in the future. You need to pick a route and together find your way to wherever it is that you want to go. I know where we would like to take you but you have to take it upon yourselves to find the route to get there. We can give you guidance in finding that path but you are driving the bus. You need to encourage each other to do what needs to be done to make the road there smoother. You need to find more that are willing to put it on the line, like each of you have done, and take the steps to move the team toward where you want to be. Some of you know the way and you must help those who need a little help finding the trail. You have a great base to build on now fill up the bus and let's get on the road to where we want go.

Justin, I was proud to see you at the Finals, and while it didn't finish the way you had planned, it took you somewhere where you hadn't been before and helped get you ready for where you are going next.

Aaron, while you too did not end up where you had planned to be, it was a still very good place to end and you left someone else with an indelible memory of just where his high school wrestling career ended and where yours moved to a place it had not been before. I am happy to play a little part in where you are.

Seniors for you the future is here and you are certainly off to places you have never been before. I was very happy that we got to visit all of those new places this season. You all worked very hard and have been to places that most others will never go, you earned those awards you got tonight but better than that you all earned my respect and the respect of everyone in this room.

Dan, you were a little late in joining this crew but you worked and grew into a wrestler in mind and body and the experience will serve you well as you pursue your career goals and join my other favorite team in the Fire Service.

Chip you are one of a kind but you are better one because of your time on the mat. I have watched you turn into a better person and that is the most important thing wrestling can do for you. I am proud of your accomplishments.

Evan, Coach Mooney said to finish strong and you took that to heart. What a strong senior season you put together and what a leader you became, congratulations

Victor, from never having wrestled to the floor at the Palace, that is a long way from Guatemala! You have done a great job as a part of your team, well done.

Glen your accomplishments speak volumes about you as a good leader, a fierce competitor and a great teammate. I enjoyed helping you meet some of your goals and watching you seal that Team District championship. I will enjoy putting your name on the wall.

This time of year I always have a case of what my friend refers to as the overs. That is when it is time for the seniors to move on and that part of wrestling is forever over. However this year the overs are not as bad as they usually are and it took me while to figure out why. It is that while I know I will miss you guys it is time for you to move on to where you need to go and then for the first time in a long time I am enjoying being part of a team that other teams are concerned with. We have become competitive once again and that is in no small part a reflection on you. Your contributions helped us get there and your legacy will help keep us there. Try not to look back at this as the best time of your life. Make it just one of many great chapters where you spent some quality time and made great friends and memories. Always remember where you were then, where you are now, and most importantly plan for where you are going next.

As always I am grateful to all of you and especially to Pat and Matt for letting a little fat guy who is as athletic an end table and never wrestled a match be a part of what I consider the greatest and most exciting sport in the world. Much of who I am and where I am is because of this sport and my relationships with all of you. Please get a disc and take your picture before you go and look at some 4,500

pictures of where we were this season, that is my thank you to all of you.

Now as we go home tonight think about what you need to do to get us where we need to go and then tomorrow start doing it.