

More Than Just a T-Shirt

We see them nearly every day of the season and on many days in between. Some that belong only to us and some that belong to others. Some that are perfectly clear and others that make us think. Some that are deep, others that seem silly and some that just leave us scratching our heads. Quotes and thoughts and reflections, bold statements and inside information. You find them on our backs and hanging from the ceiling. They are more than just a T-shirt.

They speak to an attitude that consistently drives us forward: "**Anybody, Any Time, Any Place**". A core value that Coach Mooney brought to us. To get better we must wrestle better people, a value punctuated by the fact we have only won the tournament with his name on it twice in 51 years.

They speak to the things that it takes to win. After our Team State Championship in 1999 I thought of all of the things that it took for us to get that most special of trophies. "**Dreams, Goals, Commitment, Hustle, Teamwork, Drive, Sacrifice, Motivation, Tradition, Pride, Respect, Hornets, Champions**". Those need to be in our focus every day.

They speak to way we work, the way we win, and yes even the way we lose. We must "**PrACTice Like a Champion**" every day to get better but more importantly we must always "**ACT Like a Champion**". On the mat and in our lives, we are going to be judged and remembered more for our actions than we are for our wins or our losses.

As legendary Coach Dan Gable said and many T-shirts have echoed "**Once you've wrestled everything else in life is easy**". It is a great testament to you, your parents and families, and your coaches that you have completed a season on the mat, or maybe 4 seasons and maybe more. You are bad dudes who are better prepared for the future than most.

Freshmen: How happy we are that there are so many of you still here to celebrate the season. The transition from middle school to high school is enormous and you have met the challenge. Now you need to follow the path, believe that you will get better and you will be an integral part of this teams future. It is all about a mind set: **"If you think you can or if you think you can't you're right"**. If you believe, we will guide you down that path because we already know that you can.

Sophomores: You are headed to a transitional year, **"To Be the Man You Have to Beat the Man"**. It is time to be better, to become the leaders in the room, on mat and in the hallways. There are now guys that are looking to you to see how to do it and you need to be the right guys to show them. It isn't just about winning, it is about doing the right thing even when others aren't.

Juniors: **"Every Second Counts"**. It's now or never, ask a senior if they wished they had done a little extra, worked a little harder or ran a little farther. You are in control of your destiny and your leadership controls the destiny of your team. That clock is running and before it seems possible we will gather again to celebrate a year on the mat. How do you want to finish? Tick...Tick...Tick...

Seniors: This is it, high school wrestling is no more and I hope that each of you left all of it on the mat. As I thought of you I think I found a shirt for each of you.

Hannah and Emily: I just lied a little, I don't have a shirt for you. I just have a load of thank you's for all of the time that you spent in our corner. It takes focus and attention to be a good scorekeeper and you both fit the bill.

Coach Mooney always says: **Right is Right and Wrong is Wrong"**. Thanks for

keeping it right and putting up with a big bunch of heathens, you will be missed!

JoJo: When you were a freshman you had some doubts about our mat game. You kinda wanted to walk away from the hard work and the need to keep your grades up but I reminded you that it was your only chance to be on a team with your big brother. Being wrestling brothers is a special thing and it is a part of the tradition of our sport. You told me that you didn't care, yet here you are, even after injuries and being a backup guy behind some of your talented peers. You kept on coming because **"Tradition Never Graduates"**. You were hooked as a brother and a grappler and if tradition holds true maybe you will do some time in the corner for one more of the Johnson boys.

Tyler: You bought into the sport, you believed the things that it could do for you and you found a passion that you didn't know you had. There were highs and lows but you always moved forward even when it would have been easy to take those backward steps. I hope that in your mind's eye you **"Leave No Doubt"** that this experience made you a better person for the rest of your days.

Spencer: You are a living and breathing example of a goal that we always set as a team and as an individual. We may not talk about it or write it down but it is such a part of who we are that is not necessary. We do it because we know no other way. **"Working Harder Than You"** is just what we do and you out worked everyone on your team, that should make you proud. I know you are not happy with the ending but you must be happy with the journey because you lived this goal to the fullest.

Bodie: It might not have happened, it was nearly over before it started but all of the stars and planets aligned and here we are. It was a long way from

when a group of coaches snuck in and saw a little guy with tubes and hoses coming from places you don't want tubes and hoses, to seeing a young man walking in the grand march with his teammate in that place you can only visit in March. It was Coach Mooney's last shirt and you lived it... **"Finish Strong"**.

Devin: When you packed your bags and made that 10 mile trip up the road, some had doubts. When you showed up in our room I think I told you to be ready because you were not in Haslett any more. Expectations in Williamston were pretty high and you better buy into the program. You then did the thing that was written on your back. While most people were wondering what the heck Coach Weber was talking about you decided to **"Burn the Boat"** and **"Make the Commitment"**. You shed your Viking armor and became a Hornet. We believed in you and you in us and in the end you got to climb the stairs. Not to the heights you were looking for but plenty high enough to etch your place as a Hornet forever.

Okay, enough of that before my emotions show too much. Underclassmen it is now firmly on your shoulders. The coaches have more opportunities to make you better than ever before but it is up to you to make it happen. Camps, clinics, lifting and summer league. You have to do it. Last summer I called a guy (and he knows who he is) and asked him what he was up to that evening and he said nothing but when I told him I would be over to pick him up for summer league he just didn't feel like it. We cannot be that guy. If we are to be **"Driven to Dominate"** we need to embrace every opportunity to get on the mat. There has to be **"No Excuses, No Shortcuts and No Limits"**. You have to **"Git'r Done"**. Next season has already begun and it is up to you to **"Make It Happen"!**