

Vikes,

For starters, I want to thank the Viking Family for giving me the opportunity to write to all of you. I don't want to "back in my day" you guys, but there weren't any Whitman Football websites when I was making the long walk up those stairs to practice everyday--this thing is awesome! Make sure you take a second and thank the parents for their help.

I want to make this letter as individually specific as possible, so I figured I would break it down into a few parts. Obviously, you can read all of them, but depending on your age, one may be more relevant than the other.

#### TO ALL RISING FRESHMAN AND SOPHOMORES.

Before high school, I had never played football before, and I wasn't sure whether or not I wanted to start playing. I had a thousand reasons not to—I wanted to focus on school, I didn't want to get hurt for baseball, my parents were nervous about letting me play, etc., but something in me just said that it was right and I trusted my instinct.

Going with that instinct was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Football opened doors that I never thought possible, it helped shape me as a person, and it gave me friends and memories that I will never forget.

When I came into Whitman, Coach Kuhn was the head baseball coach and I thought that I was only going to play baseball. Eight years later, there's a reason that both of us ended up focusing on football. There is no better experience.

Many of you may not appreciate this yet, but you couldn't ask for a better coach to play under than Coach Kuhn. He was a great coach while I was at Whitman, and continues to be a mentor for me today. He will always look out for you—whether it's as an athlete, a student or just a person, he'll always have your best interest in mind. I couldn't be luckier to have a guy like him in my corner.

So to all you young guns—stick with it. Football will be the most difficult and rewarding challenge of your high school careers. Every time I come home, old buddies of mine tell me how much they regret *not* playing football in high school, but never *once* has someone regretted playing.

#### TO ALL RISING JUNIORS AND SENIORS

You can not imagine how fast everything is about to happen. It's going to be exams, summer workouts, two-a-days, and, before you know it, you're going to be eating the pre-game meal before the Churchill game.

You need to make the most of every second you have before you sit down for that meal.

The way to do this is twofold; work as hard as you can and believe in what you are working for.

Before my junior season in high school, I bought a dry-erase board for my room and on it I wrote, "ATTITUDE IS A DECISION." I left that up there for so long that the "erasable marker" is now un-erasable and to this day, it's the first thing I see when I walk through my door.

This might sound cheesy, but I'm a firm believer in this. Attitude really is a decision, and it determines everything you do in life. Make the decision right now to be the best football player that you can be.

Don't feel like you *have* to go to work outs, *choose* to go to work outs. You could probably skip sets while you were lifting without people noticing and you could not run your hardest without getting yelled at, but you would just be wasting your time as well as the teams. Don't just survive, thrive. It's not an obligation, it's a choice.

The whole time you're doing all of this, keep in mind what you are working towards. You aren't squatting until you can't stand just to squat until you can't stand, you're doing it because you know it's going to make you better. It's what is going to win you that extra inch. Don't run until you can hardly stand just to run until you can hardly stand, but do it because you know that the guy next to you is working just as hard and you don't want to let him down.

Work hard, work together, and when you break it down on "State Champs," at the end of a practice or a work-out, mean it. Don't just say it, mean it. Mean it because you and everyone else in that huddle have done and are doing everything they can to make "State Champs" possible.

The last game I played at Whitman was at home vs. Churchill and they killed us. I couldn't control the fact that I had a sprained ankle that game and ran around like a three-legged dog. I couldn't control the fact that they were, in all honesty, a better team than us. And I couldn't control the fact that they decided to run up the score.

The only thing I could control was myself, what I did that game and everything that I had done leading up to it.

When the game was finally over and the clock read 0:00, I walked off that field with no regrets. If you all work as hard as you can and believe in what you are working for, you won't have any either. State champions or not, that's all you can ever ask for.

No prisoners, no regrets.

Best of luck with the season,

Carl

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*Carl Ehrlich, Whitman Class of 2005, was chosen by his teammates as the captain of the 2009 Harvard Crimson Football Team, becoming the 136<sup>th</sup> captain in the program's history.*

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