



# TROJANS FOOTBALL



## WE DO HAVE FAVORITES

One day this year, someone accused us of “**having favorites**” on our team. The implication was that this is a terrible sin. When we were younger coaches, we thought it was terrible, too.

He/She was right. We do have **favorites**. Our **favorites** are those athletes who most frequently do what we ask of them. To those that do, we give more attention. We talk to them more. We spend more time teaching them. We also expect more of them.

The fact is, that the athletes who come to us ready to learn, ready to listen, ready to act on what they learn, and try it our way even if it is more challenging and difficult than they imagined, are ready to get more out of our program. They are our **favorites**.

As coaches, we have only one thing to offer an athlete. What we can offer is our attention. This means that we attend to their needs. The reward for good behavior should be attention – attending to their needs. The consequences of inattention, lack of effort, unwillingness or unreadiness to learn, or just plain offensive or disruptive behavior, is our attention to that athlete.

How can this be any other way? If you have three children, and you spend all your time and energy working with the one that displays negative behavior, what does that tell your other children? It tells them that to capture your attention, they should behave poorly. What we reward is what we get!

As coaches, we want athletes who are eager to learn, eager to experiment, to improve and eager to work hard. We want athletes who come to us for help in developing their mental and physical skills and are willing to accept what we have to offer. Otherwise, why have they come to us? We are going to reward that athlete with our attention. In doing so, we encourage others to become like the athlete above. If we spent our time with the unwilling, and/or disruptive athletes, we would only be encouraging undesirable behavior.

We want to forge a link between attention and excellence. Excellence is the sense of achieving all that is possible and desired. Our way of making this happen is to provide our knowledge and attention to those who “attend” to us. This does result in increased performance for those that do so. We are professional coaches, and when we pay attention to a person, that person is going to improve. Over time, this makes it appear that our **favorites** are better athletes. Not at all so. The better athletes are those that pay attention, and thus become our **favorites**.

What the accusing person doesn't realize is that you must have **favorites** if anyone is to develop in a positive fashion. The coach's job is to reward those who exhibit developmental behaviors. Those are our **favorites** and they should be.

**Note: Please don't confuse favorites with favoritism!**