

Charger Nation,

It goes without saying that tonight's game is a big football game. Our boys are playing for the right to go to the state championship game. So is the other team, they are ready too! For the past five years we have been in semifinal games and every single one of them have been battles. Whether we have won the games or lost the games, every single game has been decided in the fourth quarter. The two we lost we have lost in the final minute of the game. The three we have won have been holding on in the fourth quarter. I've been telling our boys all week they are going to have to fight all game.

Tattnall is a team that has 16 seniors and they are very good at the skill positions. We are a team that has great team speed and usually teams do not match up well with our speed. Tattnall is very similar to us. You will not be awed by their size during pre game warm ups. It's their speed that makes them good. They match up well verse us. We match up well verse them. It should be a great game tonight!

***"I PRESS ON toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14***

I talk about five different words that I believe are essential to a young man's growth as a football player or any endeavor in which the commit themselves: Commitment, Consistency, Intensity, Execution, and Perseverance. With the football team this week I have been discussing and coaching perseverance. The boys have been practicing football since August 1<sup>st</sup>. They are tired and worn out. Every team that is still playing is facing the same mental challenges of being tired and worn out. Don't get me wrong. They want to play on Friday night. But they have no desire to keep getting up for film and practicing. The negatives ideas and thoughts to practice start to creep in. They don't say it but I can feel them saying this: "Coach I don't want to practice anymore, I'm tired." I get it. I understand. Young man: "Persevere to the End! Finish! PRESS ON!"

The bible tells us faith is the assurance of things hope for and the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). How can a young man persevere and finish? He must have faith that his hard work and diligence will pay off. He must have a prize he is after and that motivates him. If there is not a reward or prize at the end that is motivating us, then it is hard to press on. However, there is no guarantee that his hard work will get him what he desires. But the young man must have faith that his hard work will pay off and this faith will fuel him to continue on the journey and finish. You see, victory is not guaranteed tonight nor is a state championship. I can't promise those things. But what I can promise is hard work, perfect effort, and making no excuses will put us in a great position to Win. I have faith in our preparation. I have faith in our process. Young man: "Persevere and Finish. Have faith that your commitment to working hard and perfecting the details everyday at practice will prepare you Friday night. Do not grow weary. Do not let your faith dissipate. Press on."

The boys I look at in the eyes everyday have won 20 games in a row. I have never once during any of this time looked them in the eyes and been able to guarantee them a victory if they do all the things we ask. All I have been able to say is if you do these things it will cause you to be much more likely to win on Friday night. I have faith in our hard work and preparation, but it does not guarantee a victory on Friday night. Nothing in this life is guaranteed. We must have faith and hope in rewards, but none of them are guaranteed.

Winning tonight is not guaranteed. Success is not guaranteed. Good health is not guaranteed. Waking up tomorrow alive is not guaranteed. Georgia winning the SEC next year is not guaranteed. Alabama winning it this year is not guaranteed (even those this seems real close to a guarantee). My wife loving me tomorrow is not guaranteed (there are lots of reasons for her to grow weary with me). We put our faith in those things. We put our trust in those things.

Praise be to God. The Faith and Hope we put in Christ is guaranteed. Jesus wasn't telling us to put our hope and trust into the false hopes and promises of this world. He was telling us to put our faith and trust in the eternal God who came down to die on the cross for our sins that we may have eternal life. Jesus Christ came down and delivered us from death. He flipped the guarantee. Death was a guarantee and now life is a guarantee. Christ isn't asking us to put our faith in something that may or may not happen. He is commanding us to put our faith in something that has already been done. Where we could not defeat and overcome sin, Christ came and won and overcame sin for us.

The words PRESS ON mean so much more in Christ. Christ has a purpose for each of us here on earth and we must be diligent in our pursuit of Christ. I don't even really know what his exact purpose for me is other than to pursue him and be a light for him wherever I am. Therefore, I set my eyes on the eternal life that is guaranteed to me with Christ in Heaven. I set my eyes on this prize and this reward and it allows me to fight, persevere, and finish. I PRESS ON in my pursuit of living a life for the glory of Jesus Christ.

*"Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called." 1 Timothy 6:12*

I'm ready for this game tonight! Our boys are ready! Let's go get this done!

*"The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the Lord."  
Proverbs 21:31*

BEAT Tattnall!

Wholly for Christ,  
Coach Gess