



What leadership looks like

The Norman Transcript

— Editor, The Transcript:

Do you know what we have lost?

I had worn the number 52 for the past 3 football seasons. Not just worn it, but wore it proudly. Greg Johnson was an all-state center for Norman High in 1982 and I wanted to be just like him. He wore number 52. As a young sophomore with dreams of playing professional football and being just like Mike Webster, everything revolved around that number.

During my first day as a varsity player, my new O-Line coach Butch Peters made a suggestion to me. "Pick a number and make it your own," he said.

I did not play my last three seasons wearing number 52. It was not just a new number but also a new path that was laid before me. My coach saw in me more than I could ever know was possible. He pushed me harder than I thought was fair. Yet he knew that this was the path I had to travel to get stronger, tougher and smarter. I am not the only one either. I am just one of hundreds of young men who have been changed by the influence of our "coach."

Football can teach us a great many things about ourselves. The football field is a small universe where right and wrong, teamwork and leadership become tangible objects. You learn you can change the outcome of a game based upon how hard you work. Can you imagine having that knowledge in life? We can. We are the Norman Tigers. Butch Peters is our coach.

It matters not where our football dreams have led us. For even the best of us have to lay down the pads at some point. The rest of our lives take on a greater importance. Husband, Father, maybe even coach and life is often harder than we think is fair ... but we remember. We know what leadership looks like. We know that if we work hard enough we can change the outcome of any event. We know right and wrong and what it means to be a team player. We are ready for whatever life has to throw at us because we have walked that path before. We are stronger, tougher and smarter. We are the Norman Tigers. Butch Peters is our coach.

The number 57 is now as dear a memory to me as any I possess. It was not easy to change my number but it was time to walk a different path. It is not a path that everyone can walk. I can see him as clear as day, barking out plays and running them over and over, the summer sun squeezing every drop of sweat out of us. I remember that path he laid before me.

When my life as a husband and father, with all the obligations, stress and pressures starts to take its toll ... I remember. I am a Norman Tiger. Butch Peters is my coach.

And I am a better man because of it. Thank you Coach, we love you.

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