

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

THE SECRET TO SUCCESS, IT MIGHT NOT BE WHAT YOU THINK



This past weekend, several members of our Administrative Staff and I attended the California State Athletic Directors Conference in Reno, Nevada. We support and participate in this conference each year and truly enjoy the opportunity to spend time interacting with hundreds of Athletic Directors from the Southern Section, as well as athletic directors from around the state, and our friends and colleagues from the CIF State Office and the other 9 sections in California. I have always felt this is one of the most worthwhile things that we do during the school year and this year was no exception.

Last weekend, I was impressed by a couple of speakers at the conference who really made an impact on me regarding their messages about how to achieve success.

The speakers were Bob Ladouceur, the nationally renowned football coach from De La Salle High School in Concord, California, and Ken Niumatololo, the Head Football Coach at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

Both coaches have achieved tremendous things: Coach Ladouceur retired as the winningest coach in California history with a record of 399-25-3, which included a 151-consecutive game winning streak. Coach Niumatololo is the winningest coach in the history of the Naval Academy and has taken his teams to 8 bowl games in his 9 years as the Head Coach at Navy.

Both coaches stated that people constantly ask them about the secrets to their success and in response they were very honest in saying that they had no secrets. To them, their success was the result of hard work, team chemistry, a cohesive coaching staff and a willingness by their players to totally commit to the system they have put in place.

However, after hearing them speak, I believe there is another key to their success that they did not talk about, and may have much more to do with who they are as people, not what they do as coaches on the field. Both men were very clear that they put the welfare of their student-athletes first as their highest priority. They strive to create an environment where it is clearly evident that they care about their players as people first and players second. They are humble, devoid of ego, do not have any issues with others providing input or receiving credit and/or recognition for their contributions to their programs, and most importantly, they do not take themselves too seriously, as in their minds, it is not all about them, it is about the people they are responsible for.

In my view, those qualities were very important in contributing to their many accomplishments. I would hope that any coach looking to emulate them will consider how these coaches have met the challenges of performing at the highest level, realizing that their success is more related to who they are, not what they do. Perhaps that concept is the secret to their success. Let's hope it is not a secret anymore and that all our coaches can learn a very important lesson from Coach Ladouceur and Coach Niumatololo.

As always, thank you very much for your help and support, I truly appreciate it.

All the best,

Rob Wignel

