

# THE LONG RED LINE

DEVOTED TO ALL CARDINAL FOOTBALL PLAYERS; PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

## What I know for certain

- A week from tomorrow - all of you **will** be tested. For some, this will simply be challenging. For others, it will be the hardest thing you have ever done in your life. Either way, regardless of who you are or what you think you can do, there can be no coasting or half measures - only your absolute best effort will suffice.
- At some point, you will come face-to-face with that personal boundary - real or imagined - that always seems to want to hold you back. You will need to muster the courage to look it square in the eye and leave it behind. Limitations are really opportunities for growth and improvement in disguise. If you choose to work it, you can overcome them.
- You may need to drop some old habits and attitudes and develop new ones in their place. An honest self assessment can reveal a need to change - not simply for the sake of change - but to change for the better. This too is a choice.
- Without a doubt, you will make mistakes. Mistakes just happen to come with the territory and are a necessary ingredient for growth. Not if, but once they are made, you really cannot do anything about them. So don't collect them, store them away and carry them with you everywhere you go. Save the experience, remember the feeling, and learn from it. Throw the rest away. That wisdom you gained will help you to prevent making them again in the future.
- You might think you are failing, but I can assure you that you are not. Unless, of course, that is what you want. Failure is a choice. As long as you choose to always do your best - you cannot fail. As coaches, we promise to help you to always do your best so that choice need never come up.
- Where you start is not nearly as important as where you finish. With our help and some practice, you can also learn to "see" just how far you can go. With even more practice, work and effort - over time - you can eventually get there. Again, if you so choose.
- How you start is very important. Setting the tone, approaching this experience with enthusiasm and optimism will create the ideal setting for achievement and eventually, success.
- There will be wins and losses, on the game field, during practice, in school and at home. How you choose to respond to both will ultimately shape all future outcomes.
- You **will** make new friends. The friendships you already have, will become even stronger. There is a very real chance that one or more of these friends - either new, old or both - may stick with you for the rest of your life.
- Deep down, at some level, all coaches wish we were you. We long to feel your joy in being surrounded by friends. We hope to share in the exhilaration of your accomplishment - both big and small. We endeavor to establish a small connection to that bond that can only be created within a team; commitment, endurance, faith and trust.
- As coaches - and parents - we look forward to seeing how you turn out; what you will become.
- As coaches - and fathers - we live to spend our time, **with you**.
- Football is - without a doubt - **the** greatest sport ever invented.