

JOE GALAT SCORING POINTS

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...with proper supervision, can be a safe, valuable, and enriching experience for today's younger generation.

Honestly, isn't it better to have kids engaged with well-supervised football programs than with unsupervised activities? Many non-football playing children today participate in high risk, unsupervised, extreme sports. Others are victims of a sedentary lifestyle. Lack of physical fitness, drugs and junk food consumption, ignoring academics, and an inability to relate beyond internet devices are, unfortunately, the new normal.

The challenge is real, but not impossible. I like this phrase: "If it's to be— it's up to me". We can teach real life to our youth by way of the 100-yard classroom. We must continue to be "warriors in the war for the minds of our children." Will you join us in this endeavor?

I'm often asked why I chose the game of football. My reply is, "I didn't choose football; football chose me".

- I was born the son of a former fullback and boxer.
- I was nephew to over a dozen uncles who, during many spontaneous backyard-football games, pounded me into being a tough football player.
- I was raised in Painesville, Ohio (the home of Don Shula, the NFL's winningest coach, who played for Cleveland Browns' legendary coach Paul Brown, also a Miami U grad).

During my high school years, I found a book in the school library titled, "You have to pay the price". This book influenced me greatly. Miami University graduate Red Blaik, who coached football at both the United States Military Academy, wrote it. Blaik was a strict disciplinarian; he wrote about commitment and toughness and how these virtues can apply to every area of life. As a young man, I resonated with his call to build a legacy of character and influence.

Over the years I've come to believe there's something about the game of football that attracts some of America's greatest leaders. General Douglas MacArthur wrote the foreword to Blaik's book, and it was MacArthur who would say some monumental words while delivering a keynote speech at the American Football Coaches Convention in 1959:

"Football has become a symbol of our nation's greatest qualities— courage, stamina, and coordinated efficiency... In all my own long public service, both in war and peace, it was in my football men I found my greatest reliance".

I would hear MacArthur's words quoted often by my head coach, Bo Schembechler, when I was his assistant coach at Miami U (sometimes at 2:00 AM during late night staff meetings). Looking back on my life, I can now connect the dots. Playing football at Miami U (the "Cradle of Coaches") instilled in me a love for the game, and a love for the men who made the game great. Imagine me looking across the practice field and seeing Miami grads like Paul Brown (first coach of Cleveland Browns); Ara Parseghian (legendary coach at Notre Dame); Paul Dietzel (who coached LSU to a national championship); and LA Dodgers General Manager Smokey Alton. It was men like these—and many more over the course of my coaching career—who forged in me a desire to be great at football and even better at life. Because of the greater game, I've met some of the "crown jewels" of the human race.

Football has given me a lifetime of rich experiences and memories, and I want to pass this forward to the next generation. Please join me in defending this great sport as it encourages young people to get off the couch and become physically fit; as it teaches time management and discipline resulting in higher academic and personal achievements; as it promotes unity and teamwork amongst our youth; and as it promotes the type of leadership that is carried over to our families, our communities and our great nation.

Let's continue to teach the lesson of Red Blaik: "You have to pay the price!"