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Thunderous Words

On a hot sunny day in November of the year 2003, I was walking to football practice with a couple of my teammates. I saw a tall and slim figure walking towards me out of the sunlight. The figure turned out to be my head football coach. Coach Aggurie walked up to me, stopped me, and said he had to speak to me about something really important. It was the first semester of my junior year attending Carson High School and Coach Aggurie said some words to me I will never forget.

Before I started my junior year, I thought it was going to be easy to balance playing football and school. During my sophomore year, I didn't receive much homework, and my classes were easy to me. I had a good routine that I would follow to balance my extra curricular activities and school. Football practice was from 3:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. sometimes 5:30 P.M., I arrived home around 6:00 P.M., and if I had any homework, I would do it, and I would be done around 8:00 P.M. I figured the same routine would work my up coming junior year, but I was wrong.

When my junior year came around, I received more homework, essays, and projects than I have ever received before. Ms. Anderson, who was my English teacher, gave out an essay and a test almost every week. Football practice was harder and more demanding physically, mentally, emotionally, and it was time consuming. Instead of getting out of practice at 5:30 P.M. I got out at 6:30 p.m. officially, but most of the time I actually got out at 7:00 P.M. When I got home from practice, instead of doing my homework, I went to sleep or just let my body rest from practice. When the first progress report card came out, my grades were horrible. Let's just say I had only two passing grades; the rest were D's or F's. I thought to myself, it was a good thing this is only

the progress report, so I still had time to bring my grades up before the eligibility report card came out.

By the time the eligibility report card came out four weeks later, I thought I had brought my grades up. The day the report cards came out, I wasn't worried about my grades. I just went to class like it was a regular day. When Coach Aggurie stopped me as I was walking to practice, and said he had to speak to me, I was surprised. Coach Aggurie had a disappointed look on his face and said, "You're done!" When he said those words, I knew what he was talking about, and my heart just dropped. When I got home that night, I was thinking: How could I let this happen? And I was so disappointed in myself. But out of no where it hit me. I realized that I was concentrating more on football than my school work. I cheered myself up and told myself to take this as a learning experience.

The next day I went to school more focused and determined than I have ever been. I finally realized that school comes before all my extra curricular activities. I promised myself I would never let myself go through the disappointment of being ineligible again. Most of the time bad news and disappointment will depress student athletes and make them want to give up. In my case, the bad news just motivated me and encouraged me to work harder, try harder, and take school more seriously.