

REMEMBER THE TITANS

By Kylie Sponseller

Based on the true story of the integration of a black school and a white school, Disney's "Remember the Titans" reminds us not only of black and white, but friendship, learning, and beating the odds. This film was released in 2000 to tell the story of T.C. Williams high school, its star coaches, Herman Boone and Bill Yoast, and the talented young football players, black and white. Not only do the players' and coaches' racial differences clash but their thoughts of a quality player and coaching philosophies.

The story of T.C. Williams High, located in Alexandria, Virginia, begins with the 1971 court order to integrate the school where a quality, white, football program is established. High school football is life in this town, so one can image the upset within its inhabitants. Headed by Coach Bill Yoast, a Hall of Fame nominee, the T.C. Williams' Titans want nothing to do with their new black teammates. Upon integration, Mr. Herman Boone is given the head coach position, and wants the "blacks to have something to call their own." When the black players and the white players meet for the first day of camp, only conflict arises. Fights break out among star players of each race, whites won't block for blacks, blacks won't pass to whites, everything but a team is achieved. Each player is determined to play for himself and his own individual glory. A team, as defined by Webster's dictionary is "a group on the same side, [or] a group organized to work together," neither of which define the Titans. To break the tension amongst the team and create oneness, Coach Boone takes his players on a three o'clock in the morning run to Gettysburg, to teach the story of fighting amongst themselves, and to tell them that "if we don't come together, we too will be destroyed." After the jog, the team

comes together during camp, begins to have fun, sing, dance, joke, and even sit together and mix the races at the lunch tables. By the camp's end, the teammates are best friends, but are not given a welcoming arrival back in the prejudiced town. Through turmoil, trials, and victory, the Titans remain together, set records, and overcome racial boundaries.

The coaching philosophies of Coach Boone and Coach Yoast are in total disagreement of each other. Coach Boone is an in-your-face sort of guy, while Coach Yoast tends to be slightly more reserved and some may even say more caring than Boone. Coach Boone is very direct, strict, and lets the team know who is in charge at their very first encounter. He reminds the team that he is each player's "daddy," and that his program is a dictatorship and "he's the law." When leaving for camp, Coach Boone splits the team members up, black with white, and makes them share the bus ride and a room with their new partner. Boone forces each player to learn "particulars" about every other player of the different race. Coach Boone tells his players that they will be perfect, and will "change the way they run, eat, tackle, and win." Coach Boone does not hesitate to get in the player's faces, yell at them, criticize, and even remark, "you're killin' me, Petey." He is at times ruthless, refuses to give water breaks, for water breaks are "for cowards," and tells the team to do up-downs until they are no longer thirsty or tired. Coach Boone's directness and toughness proves to be extremely effective for the team, especially as a whole.

Coach Yoast's coaching philosophy is remarkably different from that of Coach Boone. Coach Yoast has fifteen winning seasons under his belt. During a game Coach Boone yells at a player and takes him out of the game. Coach Yoast is more willing to

work with the individuals and find them another spot on the team. He goes after his players and asks them if they are all right, a question that wouldn't even cross Coach Boone's thoughts. Coach Boone feels that Yoast is challenging his authority and is not doing the players a favor by taking them aside and "protecting them from Big Bad Boone." Yoast believes that some people do not respond to public criticism and it is not right to humiliate the players in front of their team. Coach Yoast goes as far to protect his players as to tell Boone that "there is a fine line between tough and crazy, and you're flirting with it." He also comments that "this is a high school football team, not the marines," on Boone's three a.m. jog. Coach Boone is more concerned with being a good example for his players. In the end, Coach Yoast steps up when the heat is on in an important game, but loses his bid at the Hall of Fame. Both Coach Boone and Coach Yoast have completely different coaching strategies but each helps the team in distinct ways.

Coach Boone's coaching philosophy and technique is obviously more effective in the long run for the team as a complete unit. He is able to bring a team together that, in the beginning, shared no more similarity than that of a lion and a field mouse. Coach Boone is able to build team spirit and togetherness, while Coach Yoast tends to stand in the distance. I believe that Coach Boone's dramatic, "we will be perfect," attitude helps to push his team and help the team result in the most wins for the school. Boone's philosophy also builds the most trust and respect amongst the teammates when he makes them learn of each other and shows them that they can play together and win together. He tells the players that they don't have to like each other but respect one another. Coach Boone made a team, "a group organized to work together," regardless of their

differences. Coach Yoast was more effective for the team in the long run by working with individuals. As stated, if a player is having difficulty, he does not just throw them to the bench, but works with them and finds them another role on the team. Coach Yoast seems to be more concerned with the feelings of his players. Coach Yoast was more effective at molding the individual to in the end make a team.

I feel both coaching philosophies are effective in very different ways, but end up working together to ultimately form the team. Everyone has to be willing to give and take and work with others, even if they don't share the same views. After reading each question, I started to believe that the questions were all linked together and I did tend to see them as related. Not one coaching philosophy stuck out in my mind, even though the focus was on Coach Boone. Each coach had a role to play and each was able to get his specific job done. Both coaches had respect in the end and a uniform team was built. The Titans teach us all a lesson. Life isn't like Burger King; we cannot get everything our way. Everyone gives and everyone takes. Everyone has gifts and everyone plays a role, on the team, in the classroom, in a relationship, and in the world. One of the most important parts of the movie is not the coaching but the friendship that is built between Gary and Julius, two enemies who become best friends. We all learn from someone. Teachers, believe it or not, can learn from their students and everything is not always black and white.