I Must Never Quit

By Jacoby Puglisi
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Jacoby Puglisi's college application essay on how wrestling relates to his life.

The sport of wrestling has taught me what I can do if I set my mind to it. I have learned how to push myself beyond what I think I am capable of. Every day my team gathers in a small room with temperatures rising to over eighty degrees with the doors and vents sealed for an excruciating practice that spans several hours. It is in these conditions that I see what I am made of both physically and mentally.

As a wrestler, I have certain standards that I cannot back down from no matter what the situation. One of them, that I hold as the foundation of my success, is never giving up. If I quit on myself once, I will quit every time. I have realized that this standard carries over into everything I do. In every aspect of my life, I must never quit. Through wrestling I have learned that my abilities often exceed my perception of what I think I can do, and I must go after that aspect of my character to achieve my best. Although this is something that is very apparent in wrestling, it applies in a much larger way to my life as a whole.

I have learned how to find a moment of tranquility in the middle of a furious match and in that moment of peace unleash a way to beat my opponent. In watching several jujitsu matches, I noticed how calm the fighters were and how their breathing was so slow - even at a point where the competition was very intense. I decided to apply this technique to my wrestling. Although wrestling is very different from jujitsu, and there are very few opportunities that I have to be that calm in a six-minute match, I took it upon myself to try slow, calm breathing during my practice matches at the most intense moments. It is in those moments that I found myself-making very few errors in what I was doing. I grew tired but was not out of breath or out of energy.

I was anxious to use this technique during a match. That time came more quickly than I had anticipated, and it came at a time that I was not expecting - though the opportunity was not wasted. I had been rolled onto my back and was fighting off of my shoulders, desperately trying not to be pinned. By applying the breathing technique that I had learned, I was able to turn the situation around on my opponent and put him into a pinning position. Sometimes in my daily life I can get flustered or overexcited about a situation. Through learning this breathing technique in wrestling I can now apply it to live my daily life more effectively.

Although wrestling is only a sport, it has taught me to have discipline and to push myself in every aspect of my life. I have learned to be humble in both my victories and in my defeats. I have learned how to elevate my best and to never give up. During my time wrestling I have-learned to be man.

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