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### Friday Night Lights

My heart beats like the base of a drum, the lights are on, and the drum line begins to play the fight song. I have felt these nerves before, but they are like no other. Adrenaline is pumping through my veins; I can no longer control my body I must jump around in anticipation. Then you hear it, the roar of the crowd as it echoes off the surrounding trees and sends shivers down your spine as you now know kickoff awaits. Nothing else matters when I am in this place; it is Golden Eagle Stadium where I played four years of high school football. My high school football field may just be viewed as a patch of grass to some, but to me the field is a sanctuary and it will hold a spot in my heart forever.

Friday nights are not just a game in my small town of Tabernacle, New Jersey it is an event. Everyone has come to watch their Golden Eagles make the town proud. Golden Eagle Stadium contains an atmosphere that takes every player to the top of his game. The crowd contains a new noise that rattles through a player's bones forcing him to feel what is at stake on the field tonight. Having 7,000 people roar as your team enters the field gives you a feeling few other things can. Wanting nothing more than to bring excitement to the fans, each player works hard as we feed off the spectators' excitement.

Running onto the field the team hears the announcer thunder, “Here come your Seneca Golden Eagles!” It is now that the adrenaline spikes your heart rate to its maximum as each player is itching for the first play. The national anthem plays and the teams take the field, and then for a split second, before they begin to chant once again, silence falls over the crowd as they await the kickoff. As the ball is kicked I fall into my comfort zone as now it is game time and I am focused on whatever it takes to win. This very field is where I spent four years of my life. A place where I literally gave blood, sweat, and tears as I walked hand in hand with my brothers on the team.

It is on this field that I started alongside my brother, became an All-Conference and All-County player, and made countless friends most of which I consider brothers. Investing time into an activity for such a sustained period of time makes a person have emotional attachments and connections that they would not have otherwise. After sacrificing four years of time into football and on that legendary turf I cannot help but wish I was back there playing. The memories made on that field fill my heart with passion and sadness as I look upon its green grass and crystal white lights. These feelings tug at my heart like I have lost a friend I can never see again. Being a meaningful place to my life, the field is where I grew from a boy to a man with the help of my coaches and teammates, and where I learned life lessons that will be with me forever.

Many former high school players always spoke to me saying don’t let the time fly by, and embrace high school football while it’s here because it will go by fast. Being a naive teenager I did not soak these words in as I should have and I almost took my years as a high school football player for granted. Accomplishing many things were certainly always a goal of mine, but taking a step back at some point during my four years and realizing how blessed I truly was is

something that should have been done. Never knowing what you have until it's gone is a statement that contains great truth, and a statement that I will now utilize in my life.

My high school football field may just be viewed as a patch of grass to some, but to me the field is a sanctuary and it will hold a spot in my heart forever. My father once told my brother and me in a tough time for our family, "Life is not about individuals alone or even what happens to those individuals, but how those individuals react to the things that happen to them." This statement has rung true throughout my life especially during my high school years both on and off the field. Golden Eagle Stadium is a place where I was knocked down and beat up, but it is also a place I achieved great victory and triumph along with my teammates. My high school football field is a meaningful place and part of my life I will always look back upon to realize where I come from, where I've been, and utilize the ideals it instilled in me to always press forward in life.