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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED AT THE
NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION'S
1975 AWARDS LUNCHEON
SHERATON PARK HOTEL

May I thank you most sincerely for this award -- and for the good will and good wishes that it represents. It will always occupy an honored position in my office, in my life, and in my memories. I thank you very much.

I want you to know that I feel very much at home here today because -- if you stop to think about it -- the athletic director of any college and the President of the United States, have a great deal in common. We both need the talent and cooperation of others to succeed. We both get a lot more criticism for the losses than we get credit for the wins. We both buy aspirin by the six-pack -- and we both have a certain lack of permanence in our jobs.

As one coach put it to me: He didn't so much mind the fact that his name on the office door was written in chalk . . . it was that big wet sponge hanging beside it!

But I'm sure I don't have to tell any of you the problems of being an athletic director or head coach. For instance, I see my good friend Bear Bryant sitting here . . . I was talking to Bear and he said we both had the very same experience on New Year's Day. I said, "How is that possible? I was skiing and you were at the Orange Bowl." He said, "That's what I mean. We both hit the top -- and after that, it was all down hill!"

I think Alabama played a superb game but Notre Dame just seemed to have that something extra.

It was once said that many of Britain's battles were won on the playing fields of Eton.

We could also say that amateur athletics has developed much of the muscle that has built and defended this country. And though a young person might not go to college, no youngster grows up in America today without some competitive sport. Sports are not only a preparation for life, their spirit is part of the very essence of the American competitive system.

We have a saying in my home state of Michigan. As the lakes, rivers and ponds freeze over, the sight of eager children skimming over the ice is a common one. And if you ask a young boy or girl how he or she ever learned to ice skate -- the answer out our way is a simple one: "I got up when I fell down."

We have got to get up here in America. As a nation, we must be physically, and mentally fit because the times demand that we not only compete but that we excel. And we must do it with enthusiasm -- the enthusiasm found on the fields of sport. Emerson once said: "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

This is a time for greatness in our nation -- and a time for enthusiasm.

(MORE)

In this spirit, I accept the National Collegiate Athletic Association's 1975 Theodore Roosevelt Award. I accept it not for what I might have achieved in the past -- but for what I will strive to accomplish, with the help of all Americans, in the future.

I thank you.

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