THE WAY

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FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Last week, we had the opportunity to gather as a College community for our annual 2026 Sports Assembly. It was a wonderful opportunity to recognise and celebrate the achievements of our students across a wide range of sporting endeavours.

I think it is important that we celebrate excellence. When a young person has committed themselves to training, worked hard to improve, represented the College with distinction or achieved at a high level, their achievement deserves to be recognised. Excellence rarely happens by accident. It is cultivated through consistent effort, resilience and a willingness to embrace both success and setbacks as opportunities for growth.

On Wednesday, I had another opportunity to reflect on the important role that sport plays in the lives of our young people as I watched a number of our Junior School teams compete in the IPSSO finals. Unfortunately, none of our teams came away with a win. However, I was incredibly proud of the way our students competed. They worked hard, supported one another and demonstrated excellent sportsmanship, both during the matches and in the way they responded to the final result.

In many ways, this is what makes sport so valuable. Sport provides young people with an important training ground for life.

Through practice and competition, young people learn that improvement takes time. They learn to be part of a team, to communicate, solve problems and work alongside people who may approach things differently. They experience the joy of winning and the disappointment of losing.

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There are times when they are selected and make the finals, and times when they miss out. There will be decisions by referees or umpires they disagree with, teammates who frustrate them and performances that simply don't go according to plan.

Importantly, none of these experiences need to be avoided. In fact, learning how to respond to them may be among the most valuable lessons sport can provide.

Earlier this week, as we welcomed our new Kindergarten families at Orientation, we spoke about some of these same ideas. It brought me back to Dr Judith Locke's *The Bonsai Child* and a message we have shared with parents previously. Locke challenges us to think about what can happen when, with the very best of intentions, adults work too hard to remove difficulty, disappointment or discomfort from the lives of children. Her encouragement is not that we leave children to navigate difficulty alone, but that we give them appropriate opportunities to experience challenges, solve problems and discover that they are capable of working through them. This reflects a theme I have explored previously in The Way.

Sport provides these opportunities in abundance.

When our children lose, perhaps our first question doesn't always need to be "Who won?" or "What went wrong?" Perhaps some better questions are: "How did you respond?" "What did you learn?" "What will you do differently next time?"

Similarly, when they win, we can help them learn to win well. To be humble. To recognise the contribution of others. To celebrate success without diminishing an opponent. To be grateful for the gifts and opportunities they have been given.

This is where sport becomes about much more than sport.

At last week's Sports Assembly, our Rev. Oliver reflected on Hebrews 12:1–3, which describes the Christian life using the imagery of a race:

“Let us throw off everything that hinders... And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus...”

It is a particularly fitting image when thinking about sport and the lessons it teaches. Running well requires perseverance, but it also requires us to recognise and cast aside the things that can distract or hinder us. Most importantly, the writer of Hebrews reminds us where our eyes should ultimately be fixed: on Jesus.

There is an important encouragement in this for our young people. Life will include victories and defeats, successes and disappointments, smooth times and difficult ones. There will be moments when things come easily and others when continuing requires perseverance. Along the way there will also be plenty of things that compete for our attention.

Our hope for our students is not simply that they will win more races than they lose. Rather, it is that through these experiences they will develop the character to run their race well, learning what needs to be cast aside, persevering when things are difficult and, ultimately, fixing their eyes on Jesus.

So, as we celebrate the outstanding sporting achievements recognised last week, we also celebrate the growth that may never appear on a scoreboard: the student who kept training when improvement was slow; the teammate who encouraged someone else; the player who handled disappointment well; the student who learnt from a mistake, resolved a disagreement or returned after a setback.

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On Wednesday, I had the privilege of watching some of those lessons being lived out on the sporting field. Our students may not have come away with the result they wanted, but there was still plenty worth celebrating.

These moments may not always receive a medal, but they are important because they help shape the young people our students are becoming.

And ultimately, that is one of the great gifts of sport.

Senior School Pastoral Care Groups in 2027

As previously communicated, we are currently creating the new Senior School PC Groups for the start of 2027. One consideration is the placement of siblings. Recognising that every student and family is different, we will be speaking with students who may potentially be placed in the same Year 7–9 or Year 10–12 PC Group to understand whether they would prefer to be together or in different groups. All siblings will remain in the same House, but they do not need to be in the same PC Group. If your family has a particular preference, we encourage you to discuss this together over the weekend so your child is ready to share their preference with their PC Teacher next week.

Mr Chris Wyatt
Deputy Principal

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