



December 25, 2024

By Dennis Garcia

SportsTone.net

They may not be wearing pajamas with a flap in the backside or wake their parents up in a frenzy at 5:30 a.m., but high school-aged student-athletes still enjoy the excitement of Christmas morning.

Who doesn't like a present?

Traditionally, there are gifts under the tree and stockings chock-full of goodies and some of these high schoolers get a glance of yesteryear as they watch their younger siblings rip open their presents and tear into their stockings to see what Santa Claus has left.



Who knows? Maybe some of them still do as well!

There's a good chance these gifts won't be under the tree on Christmas morning, but they are certainly presents that I would leave if I could. Not only for the student-athletes, but for the hard-working coaches of every sport who seem to be appreciated less and less each school year.

So let's take a look at some of the gifts I would leave for some of our Randolph County student-athletes, coaches and administrators.

**Uwharrie Charter Academy junior wrestler Lorenzo Alston** - a state championship, which would make next year quite thrilling as he would be going for his fourth straight state title.

**Randleman High School baseball coach Jake Smith** - another deep run in the state tournament. Really, I don't have to give him this, chances are very good he's going to get it anyways.

**Eastern Randolph's Timmy Brower** - An incredible senior season and for him to realize how fun it was to watch him play these past three years. No one has a smoother stop-and-pop shot from the wings.

**Southwestern Randolph High Schools's Brayden Chapman** - the ability for people to see how much he has contributed to the Cougars over the years. Watching over the past couple of years, he truly has been a key cog for the Cougars. (I'm still feeling bad about this one).

**Trinity High School coach Mike Sink** - All the success he truly deserves after doing just about every job imaginable and for so many years at THS.

**To every football player at Asheboro High School** - knowing how far they have come in two short years and continued success as the program continues to take gigantic steps in a positive direction.

**To all the athletic directors at our eight high schools (AHS Wes Berrier and Owen George, SWR's Chris Chapman and Matt Kiser, ER's Foster Cates, THS' Robert Mitchell, UCA's David Hayes, WHS' Andrew Davis, PG's Cody Moran and RHS' Jake Smith)** - incredible thanks for all the help they have given me over the year and for this realignment thing to work out, which leads to four years of competitive battles and hefty gates.

**To Coach Toby Strider and the SWR varsity softball team** - a hearty congratulations on your state championship, not only for earning the ultimate goal, but for how thrilling that final game was. It will be remembered forever.

**To RHS coach Shane Timmons** - health for your entire family and knowing everyone continues to have you in their thoughts and prayers.

**To Coach Rob Shore and the UCA baseball team** - Let's see: You don't need more pitching, you already have an incredible offense, your defense is solid. Not much I can give you except a THIRD straight state championship. Continue to work hard and go get it.

**To SWR's Donnie Baxter and Charlie Chapman** - If you had one gift for every student-athlete you have positively influenced, you would be opening gifts until NEXT Christmas.

**AHS' Cam Letterlough and WHS' Ellie Garrison** - congratulations as both garnered national attention this year for their achievements on the soccer field. Whenever you are included in a national scoring list, you're special.

**ER senior Will Stalker** - there are some student-athletes who leave a special impression on this old sportswriter/sports editor/announcer. With your incredible talent, drive, work ethic, team-first attitude, outgoing personality, willingness to talk and a true love for high school sports, watching your prep career has been a joy. Continued success in everything you do. And a quick shout out to those who raised you. They did it right.

**Trinity wrestling coach Brandon Coggins** - The ability to reach the ultimate goal year after year.

**To high school soccer fans everywhere** - a DVD highlighting this past season in Randolph County as Asheboro and Southwestern Randolph reached the state championship games. It was a soccer season that will be hard to match.

**To all the players on each of the volleyball teams** - a pat on the back for providing fans in Randolph County with some of the best volleyball in the entire state. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

**To AHS basketball player Jalial Timmons** - confidence to keep shooting that 3-pointer and become a consistent force on the outside. The Blue Comets already have a strong inside presence.

**To Randleman's Gracie Beane** - continued health and to realize your dad was really a pretty darn good basketball player.

**To Providence Grove's Laurel Bernhardt** - a pair of magic shoes that help shave time off your quest for a cross country state title.

**And now a few others:**

**To SportsTone's David Hart** - health and for him to know how much we all miss him and are praying for him to return.

**To Tony Wright and Bruce Trogdon** - immense gratitude for everything they have done to highlight high school sports in Randolph County and allowing me to be a part of it.

**The Randolph Hub owner and publisher Ray Criscoe** - a thank you for allowing me to do what I love to do most.

**To my wife Kellie** - all my love and appreciation for everything you have done, are doing and will do for me and your family as we navigate this life together.

**To all who are reading this** - health, happiness, a ton of victories for the local teams you follow and a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.