

All my Scouts know that when it comes to my SM moment it's time to really listen. This is that moment. I usually talk about something in the Scout Oath and Law but today, knowing that summer is upon and about 8 weeks off from school is near, I thought I'd talk about something else.

So let start with a true story. Glen was a classmate of mine at Trinity College and we played Trinity College football together. He was a defensive lineman from Farmington, Connecticut and I was an offensive lineman from West Hartford. We were friends. This was our Senior Year. I had started on the varsity of 4 years but Glen had just made it to a starting position. After 3 games he was having an OK year but was nothing special...No great tackles, sacks, great hits or stops ... Glen was a State Champion wrestler in high school so I know he was strong and tough....So one day I challenging him,....We had a drill where they put a marker behind a blocker and the defensive player needs to reach that marker. I was the blocker, Glen was the defensive player trying to get to the mark.....Before the drill, here's what I said to Glen...."Glen, I've been playing football for 8 years now and I can tell you that I've played against a lot of people, I can tell you that you're a good average player. You're OK at what you do. You hold your own but you're really nothing special. I think that's OK since I know that's the best you can do...But I can tell you that I'm a great offensive tackle and when an average defensive tackle goes up against a great offensive tackle. The defensive tackle will not reach the marker 99 times out of 100. So only 1 out of every 100 would you maybe be able to get there. That's just the fact of the matter. Average vs. great. 99 times out 100. 99 times you get blocked. 99 times...99.....99

This talk, in front of many of his teammates was a turning point for Glen. He knew he was better than average and he was going to prove it. But not that day. He never reached the marker. I blocked him every time. And I kept on saying 99 times Glen. 99 times, 99... I can tell you that it was no fun blocking him. He was really mad and it took everything I had to tryu to stop him...I actually regretted the challenge I gave him...Man...why did I do that..... We didn't speak much during the rest of the days leading up to the next game. Before the game right before he when onto the field, I went up to Glen and I said. Glen...You know Glen. The other team knows our team and they know you are average. It's your time to prove that you're better than that. It's your time. 99 times Glen ...99.

I can tell you that for that game the blockers count not stop him...That didn't know how to handle this guy that was just out to prove something....The rest of the season Glen was relentless and determined. He would never stop. He was fantastic and had a great year and was a big reason why we won the championship. After the season, during the banquet for seniors the Coach brought Glen up, looked at him and said...Glen, you were the best "Average" defensive tackle I've ever seen. He got a standing ovation from the team. It was a proud moment for Glen since we all knew he had reached well beyond the average...Glen was a Great Player.....Glen and I are friends to this day. He did not accept the average..... He was challenged by it and refused to accept it.

Now you might relate my talk to grades and school but you would be missing the larger point. I am not saying or do I really care if you get a C in a class. What I care more about is what you strive to be. What you strive to do in your life...How you approach the day.... When you take something on, what you envision the outcome to be. Is it going to be average (Like everyone else), or is it going to be unique, beyond the normal.

We all know what the average looks like. What it takes to be in the 60 or 70 percent of people that accept average...

Here's a secret...The proudest people are of an achievement the more difficult it was to achieve. To set your goal on being average limits how proud you will be of that achievement. The Eagle Projects we've completed this year have been far from the average. Our new set of Eagle Scouts have challenged the norms of their projects. New Trains through swamps in South Windsor. A new shed for this Church. Completing renovation of a little league field. These Scouts are proud of their efforts because their projects were not average.

I know Eagle Scouts that achieved the rank with projects that were 100 times less than these and their pride in their Eagle Scout rank is lessened.

To achieve a challenging goal brings with it more satisfaction than achieving something average.

This summer you have a choice that plays into this. I challenge each one of use to use each day through the summer to improve yourselves, to accomplish something new, to learn something new or improve yourselves with the idea that when you come back after the summer you will set goals for Scouts, School, Music, Sports, whatever it is... that are beyond the average. 99 times out of 100 I want you all to be above the average....You all have that capability. Do not accept that 99 out of 100 of the time you'll just be average. You can do it. Be Great All the Time AND IN EVERYTHING YOU DO STRIVE FOR GREATNESS.