



Mayor's Memo...

HIDDEN LESSONS FROM THE WASHINGTON HUSKIES



The stage is set! Here in Puget Sound, we're all looking ahead to the Washington (13-0) vs. Texas (12-1) College Football Playoff (CFP) Semifinal at the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans on January 1, 2024. This season, single digits have decided eight of the last nine games played by UW. The previous four wins by the Huskies have been by a total of only 15 points!

There is a story behind this trend... We can learn valuable lessons from the nail-biting and close finishes of the University of Washington this year. The Huskies are the second-ranked team in the nation.

Despite facing adversity, the Pac-12 Champion Dawgs found a way to win. They overcame adversity against the Beavers in pouring rain in Corvallis, Oregon, and defeated the Oregon Ducks twice in 2023. UW quarterback Michael Penix Jr., the runner-up for the 2023 Heisman trophy, has been one of the best stories in college football. For the second consecutive year, Penix Jr. was the top passer in the nation, throwing for 4,218 yards.

College football has always been a big part of my life. I played at UW all four years under the legendary Coach Don James, who taught me lessons about life. If you stop by my office, you'll see a copy of *"The Thursday Speeches: Lessons in Life, Leadership, and Football from Coach Don James"* that sits on my desk every day.

Coach James led his team with a CEO mindset: accountability, discipline, focus, no excuses, systems in place for everything, teamwork, and results. Coach James was a wealth of knowledge and instilled a playbook for each of us to prepare for everyday challenges. Dr. Peter Tormey, a former UW linebacker, in the early years of the James era, collected the speeches and put the book together in 2014 as a tribute to Coach James. Peter is Chris Tormey's older brother (an assistant coach at Washington for 16 seasons). He was also my position coach for several seasons. As my position coach, I had the opportunity to listen and learn from Coach Tormey every day.

Coach Tormey had a very memorable quote that I live by every day: **"The definition of commitment is removing the option to quit."** Think about that for a moment. These are words to live by. We all face challenges, disappointments, and setbacks. How we respond to those challenges sets the course for our lives.

Like the Huskies, our story in Federal Way is one of resilience and determination. No matter the challenge we will never give up in the face of adversity. As we approach the 2024 State Legislative Session, my top priority is to focus on police pursuit laws. We are taking proactive measures to ensure that our Federal Way Police Department officers have the necessary tools to safeguard our community against crime. The crime numbers are rising in our region, not just in Federal Way. We will not tolerate thieves controlling our communities' narrative and will tackle this issue daily. We will also relentlessly pursue local jobs and policies that will make our community safer and more prosperous. With the CFP Semifinal just around the corner, it's important to look back on Coach James' 1991 National Champion Washington team and its perfect season (the Huskies had a record of 12-0, with 8-0 in the Pacific-10 Conference that year). Let's wait and see if UW can defeat the Texas Longhorns, whom former UW head Coach Steve Sarkisian now leads. If the Huskies win, they punch their ticket to the National Championship in Houston on January 8, 2024. In doing so, they will have persevered and prevailed even against daunting odds and obstacles. The stories of Federal Way and the University of Washington remind us of our limitless potential and ability to overcome challenges. I can't wait for the next chapter!

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-Chris Tormey, Former Washington Assistant Husky Football Coach

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Thank you,

Jim Ferrell
Mayor of Federal Way

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