

Winners Take Nothing

By [Edward Curtin](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

There is no substitute for winning

football games and wars.

We are strong and brave,

having been taught winning

is what counts after all.

After all, after all the weeks of sweat,
practice after practice, play after play,
men of strength will win, be honored.

Losers, lacking muscle fight heart
eyes limbs guts and blood
will lose.

So will the children.

Oh the children. Be men, be strong.

Let us not now praise
a man, a man's man,
a coach of real men,
whose religion was winning Christianity,
whose dedication to god country blood
knew no limits, surely not
the death of children

and grownup children
of families
different, foreign, unreal.
Families of losers.

Oh, Americans, let us not pay
homage to the dead man,
leader of
strong men, winning men.

Leave it to the president to praise
his fighting spirit, bishop bless
his dedication to the cause
of winning games
of warball and football.

My fellow Americans, he is
us and we are he. We stand together
in solidarity, drones the leader
of sycophantry.

Coach, you have shown us
what it means to win on fields
of war and sport for God, team
and country,
in spite of, for spite of
children shrieking out of burning bodies.
Losers, losers, yes,

the children are the losers.

Rest, coach, for you have finally

in the end

lost a big one. You are

at peace.

Your ears cannot hear

children's tears

as they lose

their lives.

But didn't you say:

Winning isn't everything;

it's the only thing?

They had their warning,

didn't they?

And so did we.

We didn't listen then

and aren't listening still.

Perhaps we never will.

Who do you think will win

the Doomsday Bowl?

Edward Curtin is a writer whose work has appeared widely. He teaches sociology at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. A former college basketball player, he teaches the sociology of sports, and writes on a wide range of topics. His website is <http://edwardcurtin.com/>

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