

The locker room fell, eerily, silent as the players hung their heads. One player could barely stand. Sweat poured off him. Blood mingled with grass stains on his uniform. He limped over to the table where the team's sports drink and cups sat. With what little strength he could muster, he turned the table over. The container that held the liquid hit the floor with a crash. Some of his teammates jumped at the racket. "Do you even want to be remembered?" he screamed at the top of his lungs. "Losers are forgotten! Champions are immortal! What a champion does is remembered for eternity. As long as people walk the face of God's green earth, champions are remembered. He took a breath. His voice trembled with emotion. "We deserve to be here. They have no more right to this title than we do. They're not unbeatable gods. They're men like us, made of flesh and blood and bone." He looked each of his teammates in the eye. "We've bled together—won together—lost together. That makes you my brothers. On my pride, I will never quit on my brothers. Will you? Will you quit on your brothers?" he demanded.

One teammate let out a roar. He pounded on his locker with his fists. "I won't quit on my brothers!" he screamed over and over. Another teammate joined in. Then each player followed suit with the chant until the locker room shook. In that moment, each man decided they would play for each other. They decided they would play like champions. Battle cries escaped the lips of the immortals as they charged back to the field for the second half, leaving the crowd to wonder what happened at halftime.