

What We Owe the Team

The question is not what each of us is owed; it is what we are willing to build and carry together.

To: The Team From: Head Coach Subject: Recommitting to the standard we built together

Bottom line

We are not going to ignore frustration. Some of it is legitimate. When roles change, recognition feels uneven, and people believe their sacrifice is being overlooked, resentment grows. That is real, and it has to be addressed honestly.

But we are at a point where individual grievances are beginning to outweigh team responsibility. That cannot continue. The standard that made this group successful was never built on everyone getting exactly what they wanted. It was built on toughness, discipline, loyalty, accountability, and the willingness to carry difficult things for one another.

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The warning in the Opis story

At Opis, Alexander's Macedonian soldiers rebelled after a long campaign. Their anger was not caused by one announcement alone. They had accumulated grievances: changes in dress and custom, foreign soldiers being trained in their methods, and outsiders receiving positions once associated with Macedonian privilege. They felt displaced, disrespected, and pushed aside.

That matters because resentment rarely arrives as one clean argument. It accumulates. A missed acknowledgment becomes a pattern. A role change becomes a question of status. A difficult decision becomes proof that leadership no longer values the people who carried the burden before.

Alexander had intended to discharge older or wounded soldiers with gifts, but they heard contempt instead. His intended message and their received message were completely different. That is a leadership problem-and it is also a team problem. We have to be honest about what we are experiencing without allowing frustration to become an excuse for abandoning the group.

Remember the exchange

Alexander challenged his soldiers to remember what they had done for him and what he had done for them. That is the right question for us as well-not as a weapon, and not as a demand for blind obedience, but as a reminder that this team is an exchange of sacrifice.

Veterans have given time, health, comfort, and opportunity to establish the standard. Leaders have absorbed pressure so others could develop. Younger players have brought energy, talent, and ambition that moved the group forward. None of those contributions cancels the others. They are the reason this team exists as more than a collection of individual careers.

What we have built was not handed to us. It was paid for through shared hardship, discipline when nobody felt like being disciplined, and trust earned over time. The benefits of belonging to this group cannot be separated from the responsibilities of belonging to it.

Recognition matters-but it cannot be the only fuel

The Macedonians' final grievance was symbolic: Persian soldiers had received the title of "kinsmen," while they had not. They were not only arguing about authority or material reward. They were arguing about belonging and recognition.

That concern is legitimate here too. Every player wants to know that his work matters, that his sacrifice is seen, and that his place in the group is respected. Leadership must make room for those conversations. We will not dismiss them.

But recognition cannot be the only reason we do the work. If our commitment disappears whenever attention, status, or role allocation feels unfair, then our identity is conditional. A team cannot survive on conditional commitment.

Respect is not something we demand from the room before we give anything to it. It is something we earn repeatedly through preparation, response, reliability, and the way we treat the people beside us.

What changes now

1. Bring grievances directly and constructively. Say what is wrong without turning frustration into division or public disrespect.
2. Stop measuring every decision only by personal impact. Ask what the group needs, what the standard requires, and what your teammates are carrying.

3. Honor the work that came before you. Veterans and leaders are not obstacles to your future; their sacrifices helped create the platform on which you stand.
4. Accept accountability with the same seriousness as praise. Discipline is not an insult. It is how a talented group protects its identity.
5. Make unity visible. Shared commitment has to appear in preparation, communication, effort, and how we respond when roles or outcomes disappoint us.

At Opis, reconciliation became real only when it was made visible: former opponents were given a shared title, placed together at a public banquet, and joined in common ritual. Words mattered, but the restored relationship had to be enacted.

That is our task. We do not need a performance of unity. We need the daily version: standards kept when inconvenient, teammates defended when absent, correction accepted without retreat, and sacrifice made without keeping score.

We have every right to want more from this team. We also have an obligation to give more to it. We will address what needs addressing, but we will not let resentment become our identity.

Recommit to the group. Recommit to the standard. Recommit to the people who share the work with you.

We move forward together-or we weaken separately.