

Chicken Soup

for

Friendswood ISD

I had been teaching and coaching for 13 years when I entered the 2019 volleyball season. It was my fourth year at Friendswood HS and I had my first four-year class of seniors starting their last season with me. As with every year, we had high expectations and pressures of the season coming into it, and I truly had no idea what the next four months would bring.

We had a very rocky preseason and continued to work hard to truly mesh as a team. District came and we were rolling. As we moved into playoffs, I knew that this could be a special team and season. We won a huge game against Leander Rouse to clinch a spot in the regional finals, and as luck would have it, it was against my former team, Manvel. I knew at that moment in time, the stars had aligned and we were destined for a trip to the State Tournament. There was nothing that was going to stop us.

I remember the moment I knew we were going to State: We were up by about 8 points in the 4th and possibly deciding set, and we could all taste it. The look in all the girls' and coaches' eyes was something I can't describe. The moment the ball hit the floor on game point and we had clinched the Regional Championship and a trip to State was something I will never forget in all of my days.

What came after that was more than I could have ever imagined. This town, this district, and all of the community put so much into our team and program. From the interviews, decorations, pep rallies and parades, these girls and our coaching staff were truly celebrated. One particular moment that will forever be etched in my mind was as we headed out of FHS from the biggest pep rally I have witnessed and drove down 2351 past Bales and Westwood, with all the screaming kids, our charter bus came to a stop. The Principal at Bales had planned for my 3rd-grade daughter to run out into the road to give me a hug and wish us luck as we made the trip to Dallas. I have had a lot of great moments and memories here in Friendswood but the way this District chose to rally around our program was truly something remarkable.

I am honored and forever grateful to be in such a great place and look forward to a trip back down 2351 in the future to see a bunch of screaming k-5th graders waving their towels and cheering our volleyball program on.

-Sarah Paulk, FHS Head Volleyball Coach