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### **What FOOTBALL is all about.**

In a record setting year and with a number of players reaching milestones, Senior Tim Adkins recorded his one and only career varsity tackle for the 2013 Wheelersburg Pirate Football Team. Tim's impact on the program and more importantly the program's impact on him was one that cannot be statistically measured. To understand the whole scope of this player's journey one must begin with his freshman year at Wheelersburg HS. Tim was a freshman in my Physical Science Class. He dressed in all black ragged torn clothing and his long hair that didn't allow anyone to really see his face. Tim struck me as one who didn't care much for the structure of school and his attendance and grades reflected just that. Tim's face was often buried in a book and quickly yet he quickly showed signs of being very intelligent. Tim was not challenged at the level he needed to be with any of the classes he had his freshman year and with his absences above 100 days, he failed his freshman year. Entering his sophomore year Tim was repeating all of the same material, scoring A's on tests, but not caring to complete classwork and he would receive a C for the year. During his sophomore year Tim came out for winter weights with the Football Team. Tim's coordination and athletic ability was minimal but one could tell that he had the desire to be better. During the first week we lifted we were running on the parking lot and Tim tripped and scrapped his whole back up to where it was bleeding through his torn shirt. Tim only lasted a few more weeks then as the weather broke in the spring he drifted away like many others tend to . The next year Tim improved himself in the classroom and again came out for weights. This time he was a little more driven. His attendance was a little better and one could tell he was starting to feel challenged, and a sense of belonging. That spring I had the 2013 potential players fill out some information for me to be able to order some of the items needed for the fall. I always have the players answer one question in a well written complete sentence. What are your goals for the 2013 Football Season? Tim's answer was as follows: "To improve myself on an athletic and disciplinary level. I believe the Wheelersburg Football Program puts me in an environment that teaches me goodwill, discipline, and respect. I hope to improve myself in that environment, not as a player or an athlete but as a person." Well I was impressed to say the least, I hope that every member of the team is thinking this same idea but to have one write it down and turn it in well I don't get many of those. While I was impressed I knew it was a far stretch to get Tim Adkins to commit to anything as tough as summer weights, two a day practices, and the length of an entire season. Tim had no means of travel; he had no clothes to really wear each day. So I asked him where he lived and paired him with one of our senior captains, Cam, who lived close to Tim's house and asked if he would help ensure that Tim had a ride to practice. Cam agreed and told Tim he had better be there and be ready. Tim showed up the first day and every day after until one day cam was late and had to run. Cam returned to Tim's house and demanded a reason why and the Team Captain communicated that it had better not happen again or

there would be no more rides to practice. Tim promised it wouldn't, and held to that promise and the two were the first at nearly every practice. It was one trip home from practice when Tim asked Cam if would care to stop for something to eat. Cam responded Sure? Why? Are you hungry? Tim then acknowledged that he had not had any food in two days because there was nothing to eat in their house. This struck Cam because he had never gone without and for one of his teammates to not have food during summer practice really awakened him to differences in the world. Tim was never hungry again. But it was a second admittance by Tim that truly caused change in his life. Tim was dragging one day and Cam asked him if he was sleeping at night. Tim informed him not very well because he had no bed and then shared some details of the living conditions within his house. Cam went home that night and told his mom that she needed to do something about what Tim had to endure. Cam's mom was reluctant to get involved and refrained from doing anything at the time. Later the same day, Cam asked his mom again if she had done anything and told her he would not be going to bed that evening until she had made a call to see about getting something done about Tim's situation. That call to a community member eventually placed Tim in the custody of new guardians and he now had a bed, clothes, food and never again went without. The rest of the year Tim not only attended every practice but he jumped in every drill, every time we needed someone on special teams, or scout team his was one of the first to volunteer. There were times I had to take him out to put in someone who was a little bigger or faster to give our first team the look they needed. But Tim never complained. At one point during the year Cam had been frustrated with his teammates and had gotten on them pretty hard. On the way home Tim took the opportunity to humble the Team Captain with his own explanation of how he should never address his teammates in that manner again if he truly wanted them to play for him. It was now Tim who was giving back to Cam. Tim played some offense, defense and special teams in freshman games, JV games and in one Varsity Game, Tim recorded his one and only tackle. Tim also improved himself in the classroom. Tim has been excepted by two university for the fall semester and will have his choice on where to attend. At the end of the year the team votes on a sheet of paper for Team awards and there is a place to write thoughts on the year, good or bad that you may have. It was late and I though everyone had cleared out of the locker room, not Tim he had written under the question turned the paper over and had almost filled the back page. The following text was is what Tim wrote that day and was placed on two plaques, one that was given to him and a second that hangs in our locker room so that others can see what this game we all love and endure is all about.

## **BURG FOOTBALL**

“Football changed my life in its entirety. I was not in a position in my life to succeed or excel. I asked on a paper in the beginning that football would provide for me an environment that promoted hard work, respect and success. I gained from this year far more than I had asked. I am now in a position to succeed and excel in my life. I have an opportunity to go to college, a better home life, a more determined work ethic, and moral values, all of which I can attribute to this wonderful football program and the people associated with it, whether that be the coaches, my teammates, or the community. I cannot in words describe how thankful I am for the opportunity to play and be a part of the team. I cannot thank the program enough for the life lessons I have learned. I’ve learned football is a game of winning and losing. Not just the game, but everything you win and learn in the process. Individually every player wins the respect of his teammates and his coaches. With that we’ve won their friendships and the right to call each other brothers and family. As a team we’ve won the respect of the community and our opponents. My father always told me the secret to happiness is to find something more important than yourself and dedicate your life to it. I never understood what he meant by that until I became part of this team and learned what it means to dedicate your life to your family, and your community.”

**Tim Adkins - # 61 – DT**

1 Varsity Tackle & Lifetime of Memories