

August 11, 2008  
A Monday

Dear Neil,

I hope the summer finds you well, and that you and your lovely bride are still enjoying being newlyweds. Charlottesville has been hot and dry, and I await this fall with great anticipation of hopefully at least mediocre results from Coach Groh's football team.

I write this letter to express my desire to be considered for an invitation to the Ponce. I am aware that there is quite a waiting list, and many worthy candidates, and am willing to be patient. Also enclosed is an athletic resume for your review. I have started playing once again, and while my results leave plenty of room for improvement, I have developed a true reverence for the game. Please indulge me with a few moments of your time while I make an attempt to explain my admiration of golf this with my very modest abilities.

In this day and age of moral decay and a general lack of respect and class that saturates most of our sports and athletes, those who play golf are like a channel to another era, a time where a man referees himself and regulates his behavior as a gentleman. Your word to your competitors is the most important result of any match, and should never be compromised for any score, for any wager, for any reason. You are bound to this code of the game. I might be so bold to term it the Consistency of Honor. What greater compliment can a man strive for than to be recognized as a person who can be counted on to be honorable? The Consistency of Honor presides over the course like the sky above, like the grass under your feet. It is tangible, it is real. It is central to the game of golf and therefore, to the golfer himself. It is, in my opinion, the essence of golf, not the swing, or the score, or the beers at the turn, but this development of honor, the spiritual element of the game.

What does it say about those who believe in this code and decide to take part in this game of golf? What does it say about someone who believes in Honor? In Principles? In Nobility? Most people would scoff at such antiquated notions of conduct. I disagree. The actions that govern behavior on the golf course are those that should oversee your actions as a citizen, father, husband, son, brother, friend. I think the quiet qualities I just mentioned speak with a thunderous roar about a man, about how he carries himself and conducts his affairs. Alas, if all mankind could be trusted to bear responsibility, to call penalties on himself, to be trustworthy, to be gracious in victory, to be noble and congratulatory in defeat, I think the world to be a much improved place.

A quick story to be fully transparent and honest. The darkest moment of my athletic career was losing the 1996 National Championship in overtime to Princeton. A devastating loss, but even more lasting was the ruinous way that I treated one of my former high school teammates (Ben Heyworth) who played for Princeton. I was neither

respectful to him nor congratulatory, rather I was sulking, dismissive, and downright rude. To this day, while the loss is painful, the lack of class that I exhibited to someone who was not only proven better than me that day in the arena, but also someone who was a friend of mine, and a gentleman in his own right. He was deserving of better than he received from me. I have walked with the shame of acting that way for a long time. It is the ugliest scar that I carry.

I am of the opinion that the finest hour of sports and athletic competition is when the event transcends what is happening on the field. The 1980 Olympic Hockey team. Bird versus Magic. Ali versus the World. Theismann's son in his locker. Earnhardt at Daytona. Montana with 3:10 left in Super Bowl XXIII. Secretariat winning by 31 lengths at the Belmont. Nicklaus with his son caddying at the Masters in 86. It is a moment when the sport becomes bigger than the sport, where people walk away and it affects patterns of life. When the outcome or a performance shows a better way of life, leads man to a pursuit of perfection, of humility, of achievement, of class and respect. I would like to think that golf has begun to influence my life beyond the course. I say to you sir, how lucky I am.

Now, fast forward to 2008. A new perspective has emerged as I become immersed in the game of golf. My decision to pick up golf clubs, has not only bound me to the honor that is inherent in the game, but has permeated my dealings away from the course as well. It is time to act like a gentleman. Three weeks ago I sent a letter to my friend, Ben Heyworth. In it I expressed my sincere regret for my behavior that Memorial Day in 1996. I apologized if I in any way took something away from his win, from what should have been a really special moment for him. In my view, there is a direct correlation to my attempt to rectify this wound from my past and my involvement in the game of golf. It is really quite simple, I am a better man today because of my involvement with golf.

Would I have dealt with this situation if golf has not entered my life? Maybe, maybe not, it would be purely speculative to comment. I am not particularly interested in what might have been in the past or what may be in the future. Neil, I am greatly interested in the now, the current, and in being an honorable man. I am interested in being someone who can be trusted to keep his own score. I am interested in being someone who will bear responsibility and call a penalty on himself, no matter the repercussions. I am interested in associating with others who will hold themselves accountable and can be trusted to do so. I am interested in principles.

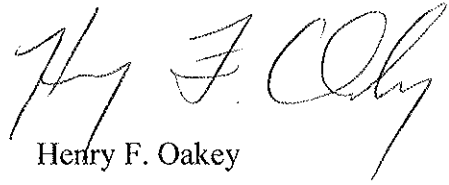
I am interested in being a gentleman.

I am interested in the Consistency of Honor.

I am interested in being involved in the Ponce.

I am,

Yr. Humble Friend,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "H. F. Oakey". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Henry F. Oakey

Henry Fenton Oakey  
1650 Browns Gap Turnpike  
Charlottesville Va  
22901

- 1982 SOCA (Soccer Organization of Charlottesville Albemarle) Soccer Championship
- 1984-1985 SOCA Championship
- 1986 RMYSL (Richmond Metropolitan Youth Soccer League) Championship
- 1986 Carolina Yacht Club 12 & Under Regatta Champion
- 1987 RMYSL Championship
- 1987 City League Basketball Championship
- 1987 All Star Dixie Little League
- 1988 Lane Babe Ruth Baseball Championship
- 1988 Lane babe Ruth Baseball All Star
- 1988 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Basketball team member as 8<sup>th</sup> grader
- 1988 Carolina Yacht Club 15 & Under Regatta Champion
- 1989-90 enter Charlottesville HS, junior varsity basketball, varsity lacrosse letter winner
- 1990-91 Varsity Football starter and letter winner, junior varsity basketball, varsity lacrosse letter winner
- 1991-1992 Varsity Football, two way starter, varsity lacrosse starter, letter winner, team captain
- 1992-1993 entered Deerfield Academy, Varsity Football starter, Varsity Basketball, Varsity Lacrosse (2<sup>nd</sup> team All New England)
- 1993-1994 Varsity Football starter, Varsity Lacrosse (All New England, Lance Odden Award Offensive Player of the Year, Team MVP, All American, North South Game)
- 1994-1995 Entered the University of Virginia on a lacrosse scholarship, first player from the Commonwealth of Virginia to do so, Varsity lacrosse, NCAA Semifinalist
- 1995-1996 Varsity Lacrosse, starter, NCAA Finalist, TIT Champion
- 1996-1997 Varsity Lacrosse, medical redshirt to recover from knee injury (ACL, LCL, MCL torn, Meniscus torn in 2 places, fractured kneecap)
- 1997-1998 Varsity Lacrosse, starter, NCAA Quarterfinalist
- 1998-1999 Varsity Lacrosse, National Champion, Tom Rixey Award for Leadership and Inspiration
- 2008 Twilight Golf League Runner Up Farmington CC