

# Eddie, The 25 Year Reunion

## The Annual Coaches' Meeting

Copyright © 2022 by Dr. Robert E. Zee

The Autumn semester brings the annual coach's meeting of the divisional track coaches. During the meeting, the topics of discussion include reviewing the order of events at the meets, any proposed rule changes, setting the meet dates for the following academic year, and any other issues that may be of concern to the teams in the division. This year, there are several applications for new meet officials that must be approved. Oddly, over the last two decades, the agenda has appeared to leave ample room for scrutinizing the University's track and field program.

Representing the University this year is Mr. Frazier, who is now sixty years old, Dr. Leighton, Dr. Karakova, Mark Svoboda, and Kathy Bogenskaya. Dr. Karakova, being the regional rules expert, attends the meeting every year. Kathy, who attended the meeting for the last three years, decided to attend again this year. Mark is attending the meeting today purely for entertainment purposes and the hope of messing with someone.

When the introduction of today's attendees comes to the University's table, Dr. Peter Gregory, the chairman, announces, "representing the State University, please welcome Mr. George Frazier, Dr. Athena Leighton, and Katherine Karakova." The attendees clap, which is generally accepted to be the appropriate protocol. Once the clapping subsides, Kathy corrects Dr. Gregory, announcing, "that's Doctor Katarina Bogenskaya, not Katherine Karakova." Dr. Gregory sarcastically replies,

“well, I was close.” Kathy replies, “close only counts if you’re throwing a hand grenade, Dr. Gregory.” The attendees laugh at Kathy’s remark. And, you can be sure that Dr. Gregory will not make that mistake again.

Trying to recover from his mishap, Dr. Gregory cordially asks Mr. Frazier, “and, who is the new member of your coaching staff this year, Mr. Frazier?” Ticked off about Dr. Gregory’s treatment of Kathy, Mr. Frazier replies, “joining us for the meeting this year is Coach Mark Svoboda. I’m sure many of you recognize the name. Mr. Svoboda is our field events coach. He’s the one responsible for coaching our field events team to their enormous victories for the last five years.” What Mr. Frazier is alluding to is that, under Mark’s coaching, the field events team has taken the gold medal and silver medal in every event for every meet during the last five years. And, the sly Dr. Gregory knew full and well the identity of the new member sitting at the University’s table.

During the other introductions, pointing to a table at the other side of the room, Kathy whispers to Mark, “look who’s back.” Seeing a past problem, Mark whispers back, “he must have gotten out of jail.” At the other side of the room is Dr. James Nicholson, who was convicted of brandishing a weapon and various charges associated with gambling fifteen years ago. Kathy taps Mr. Frazier on the shoulder, whispering to him, “look who’s back again at the Dogpatch University table.” Laughing under his breath, Mr. Frazier whispers to Kathy, “we’d better start watching out for the spies again.”

Once the introductions are completed, one item of interest on the agenda is that of the indoor 1,500-meter event. Dr. Gregory announces, “the first item on today’s agenda is the 1,500 meter run. In other divisions around the country, the 1,500 meter run is being replaced with the 1,600-meter run during the indoor season. The proposal has been made in our division to replace the 1,500 meter event with the 1,600-meter event. At this time I’d like to open the floor for discussion on the

matter.” No discussion, however, should be necessary. The 1,600-meter event is the new standard.

Mark sits back, wondering if the meeting, which just began, can get any more boring. If Mark had his way, he'd go back to the introduction of Kathy, and mess with Dr. Gregory. But, Mark, a bit older now, has to behave himself, in theory anyway. Mark may be outwardly behaving, but you can be sure that, inwardly, his mind is not.

Mr. Crumpler, who always has something to complain about, asks, “why, exactly, are we doing this?” Dr. Gregory replies, “the change is being made solely for the reason I stated. The 1,600-meter run is the new standard. Our division, sooner or later, will have to conform to the new standard.” Mr. Crumpler, a bit on the inept side, replies, asking, “so, the finish lines will have to be re-marked for that one race?” Showing his ignorance, Dr. Gregory replies, “I'm not sure that will be the case for every track.”

Somewhat annoyed at the lack of knowledge of Dr. Gregory and Mr. Crumpler, Dr. Karakova interjects, “may I address this subject, sir.” Hoping that some light can be shed on the subject, Dr. Gregory replies, “sure. Go ahead, Dr. Karakova.” Dr. Karakova stands and, walking around, orates, “the 1,500-meter run on a 200-meter track is seven and one half laps. The 1,600-meter run, on the same size track, would be eight laps. So, the starting line and the finish line would be the same, as in the other races run indoors. And, I might add, the 1,500-meter run is the only indoor distance event run on the 200-meter oval track where the starting line and finish line are not in the same location. I don't really see how this would be a technical issue at all for any track.” It is, perhaps, an issue for the mathematically challenged Mr. Crumpler or logistically challenged Dr. Gregory.

During the discussion, Mark whispers to Kathy, “the only thing I see is that it will take our distance team ten more seconds to beat the competition.” Kathy replies, “seriously. I don't see what the big deal is.” Overhearing

Mark and Kathy's conversation, Athena whispers to them, "these guys would argue about the time on the clock should the issue come up." Mark laughs, telling Athena, "maybe I should propose that we shift to using metric time next season." Kathy laughs, and whispers, "I haven't heard about metric time in a long time!"

After a long and unnecessary discussion, the resolution is finally passed, replacing the 1,500-meter event with the 1,600-meter event during both the indoor and outdoor seasons this year. As the discussion moves on to a few more boring topics, Mark sits back and studies the format of exchange between the coaches, waiting patiently for the main event to begin.

Mid morning, Dr. Gregory finally gets to the subject he has been waiting all year to address, boldly announcing, "I do believe, my fellow coaches and colleagues, that the time has come for another full financial and academic audit of the teams in our division. My concern again is that one team in particular has clearly dominated the division for an extended period of time. It is inconceivable to me that one team in particular can attain such domination while, at the same time, operating within the same budgetary and academic constraints and rules as the other teams in the division." As Dr. Gregory expresses his concern, Mark smiles, knowing that the shit show he has been waiting for is about to begin.

Clearly knowing to which university Dr. Gregory is referring, Dr. Leighton interrupts Dr. Gregory's presentation, and asks, "may I ask, sir, for the record, to which university you are referring?" Dr. Gregory replies, "Dr. Leighton, it is clear as day that I am referring to your University. I think everyone in the room, including you, knows that." Dr. Leighton replies, "really, Dr. Gregory? I'm glad you clarified your stance as to which university you are speaking of. What seems to be your problem this year, sir, if you don't mind me asking?" Just fueling the fire for the fun of it, Dr. Leighton clearly has mastered the art of psychological warfare and does so in quite an eloquent manner. Truth be told, Dr. Gregory is not only

very intimidated by Dr. Leighton's presentation style, but also by Dr. Leighton herself.

Caught off guard by Dr. Leighton's forthright response, Dr. Gregory shuffles a few papers, thinking of how to answer. During the interlude, Mr. Frazier whispers to Dr. Alexander Karakova, "it sounds like Athena is going in for the kill early this year." Dr. Karakova replies, "Dr. Gregory hasn't learned his lesson yet. He pulls this crap nearly every year, and it gets him nowhere." Overhearing Mr. Frazier and Dr. Karakova's conversation, Kathy whispers to them, "but, at the very least, it's really kind of fun to watch." With a momentary pause in the discussion, Kathy wants to respond, "waiting", but, at this phase in her life, she knows she quite can't get away with it.

About a minute passes by, prompting Dr. Leighton to break Dr. Gregory's silence by asking, "please elaborate, Dr. Gregory, on what your specific complaint is. And, please don't entertain me with your plethora of ridiculous complaints, such as the existence of pollen on the track, as you have done in the past. Also, please do not entertain either I or the other coaches representing my University with generalities, such as 'one team in particular has clearly dominated the division' or with vague and nonspecific budgetary or academic issues. As I've mentioned in previous meetings, our University has endured any scrutiny we've been subjected to. And, we will certainly endure any audit that you have planned this year."

Attempting to also orate in an eloquent manner, Dr. Gregory responds, "Dr. Leighton, I think it is clear that everyone here in this room is tired of the dominance of one team in the division. Unilateral dominance completely kills the spirit of competition during our divisional meets. I also might add that, in the four-way meets, the goal has become to come in second place when your team is participating. With your University's track record, it is clear that something is going on that is not quite above board. That, in itself, would suggest a full-scale audit and investigation is in order."

Not liking Dr. Gregory's accusation in the least bit, Dr. Leighton replies, "please allow me the opportunity to take what you just said, Dr. Gregory, and turn it around 180 degrees, and repeat it back to you, if I may." Referring to the notes that she just took, Dr. Leighton tells Dr. Gregory, "Dr. Gregory, I think it is clear that everyone here in this room is tired of the poor performance of one particular team in the division, specifically yours. Unilateral inferior performance completely kills the spirit of competition during our divisional meets. I also might mention that, when your team is participating in a four-way meet, the four-way meets are actually three-way meets. With your University's track record, it is clear that something is going on financially where scholarship money is being diverted to some other cause. That, in itself, suggests that both an in-depth audit and an investigation are in order." As the level of snickering rises, Dr. Leighton asks Dr. Gregory, "shall I go on?" Dr. Gregory replies, "that was quite uncalled for, Dr. Leighton." Dr. Leighton replies, "and, so were your comments, Dr. Gregory. If you persist in singling out our University, please expect the same in return. And, for the record, I am still waiting for your response."

Meanwhile, Mark is paying close attention, watching as Dr. Leighton begins to make mincemeat out of Dr. Gregory. Mark observes that, at the higher academic level, people still mess with other people, albeit in a slightly more civilized manner.

Interrupting the exchange, Mr. Crumpler stands and, taking the floor, exclaims, "I can't believe this! We're all tired of not standing a chance of winning anything in the divisional meets!" Mark yells out to Mr. Crumpler, "so, train more. Deal with it." Now hot under the collar, Mr. Crumpler, who apparently was not paying attention earlier when Mark was introduced, asks Mark, "and, just who are you?" Mark calmly replies, "Mark Svoboda. Maybe you remember me from when that crazy Major Nachlobrocklin guy ran for your university."

Now fuming and expressing his frustration, Mr. Crumpler hammers his fist on the table, and exclaims, "you people have to be stopped!" Remembering what Dr. Zunde once said, Mark calmly replies, "I agree. Your job is to stop us on the track. So, stop us. Go for it, junior. Waiting." In response to Mark, Mr. Crumpler again slams his fist on the table, getting his anger across, but not his point, if he even had one. And, Mark has learned from Dr. Zunde that the calmer one responds to another person's anger, the more likely the other person is to fly off the handle.

Attempting to stop the heated exchange between Mark and Mr. Crumpler, Dr. Gregory yells out, "hold on, here. Hold on. Everyone, please calm down!" Mark replies, "I am calm," which cannot be disputed. Mr. Crumpler throws his hands in the air, exclaiming, "doesn't anyone get it?" Mark calmly comments, "he's obviously not calm," fueling the fire even more. Attempting to regain control of the meeting, Dr. Gregory announces, "okay. Let's back up and take this one item at a time." Mark whispers under his breath, "don't strip your gears," causing Kathy to laugh, which does not go unnoticed by Dr. Gregory.

Once everyone calms down, Mr. Frazier announces, "if you'd like, I can clarify the issue at hand." Expecting a more civilized response from Mr. Frazier than he received from Mark, Dr. Gregory replies, "sure. Go ahead Mr. Frazier." Mr. Frazier boldly announces, "if you want to win more, there's one very important technique you must teach your athletes, which some of you obviously have not been doing." Mr. Frazier pauses, waiting for a response from Dr. Gregory or the audience. Fifteen long seconds go by, prompting Dr. Gregory to ask Mr. Frazier, "well? Are you willing to share that with us, Mr. Frazier?" Mr. Frazier announces, "sure. It's simple. If you want to win, have your athletes put one foot in front of the other faster than their opponent!"

Mr. Frazier's response draws a plethora of hissing, laughter, discussion, and anger from the audience.

Among those laughing is Athena, who whispers to Mr. Frazier, “you’ve really done it now, George! Our secret is out!” Mr. Frazier smiles, and replies, “I’m just waiting for one of them to tell me that it doesn’t work.” Athena laughs, replying, “as long as your opponent’s legs aren’t a lot longer than yours!” Dr. Gregory, of course, ignores Mr. Frazier’s comment, writing it off as yet more antagonism from the University’s table. But, Dr. Gregory started it. He should not expect less in return.

Once everyone again calms down, looking down his written list of complaints, Dr. Gregory announces, “the first item on the list, Dr. Leighton, is the advanced placement high school classes offered by your University that are clearly a training ground for your University’s track team. These so-called advanced placement physical education classes in track and field are clearly a training class for your future track and field athletes. Would you care to explain to us, Dr. Leighton, the details of this highly secretive training program?”

Perceiving Dr. Gregory’s sarcasm, Dr. Leighton replies, “no. I would prefer not to respond, sir. But, since you brought it up, let me clarify one issue. The classes we offer are not ‘advanced placement’ classes as you alluded to. Advanced placement classes are conducted at a high school. Dual enrollment classes are conducted at a college or university. Please learn the difference, sir. But, anyway, since you asked, the track and field classes offered to high school students in a dual enrollment arrangement clearly falls under the jurisdiction of the University’s academic program. As I told you repeatedly in the past, If you even attempt to disallow those classes being open to eligible high school students, you’ll have to completely eliminate any and all dual enrollment classes offered by every college or university in the entire country. You, sir, are not even remotely prepared to fight that battle.”

Not accepting Dr. Leighton’s answer and having no recourse, Dr. Gregory moves on to the second item on his agenda, stating, “it is my understanding that Mark

Svoboda is one of the instructors of those physical education classes. Mr. Svoboda does not have an advanced degree, precluding him from teaching that class. Any comment?" Dr. Leighton replies, "Mark Svoboda is officially listed as a teaching assistant and equipment manager for the Introduction to Field Events, Advanced Field Events, Introduction to Track, and Advanced Track classes. Either I or Doctor Katarina Bogenskaya is officially listed as the instructor of those classes. And, please be reminded that Dr. Bogenskaya, as her title suggests, does have an advanced degree, thus allowing her to teach at both the undergraduate and graduate level." Dr. Gregory frankly tells Dr. Leighton, "you don't really expect any of us to believe that Mr. Svoboda is not the primary instructor of the field events class, now do you, Dr. Leighton?" Dr. Leighton replies, "teaching assistants assist the instructor, which is exactly what Mr. Svoboda does, Dr. Gregory." It is clear that Dr. Gregory knows that Mark plays a bigger role than that of a teaching assistant.

Wanting to gain the other teams' support in his case, Dr. Gregory informs Dr. Leighton, "and, is it my understanding that Mr. George Frazier is also an instructor of those classes?" In a play of words, Dr. Leighton nonchalantly replies, "I don't know. Is that your understanding?" Now angry, Dr. Gregory asks Dr. Leighton, "let me get right to the point, Dr. Leighton. Is Mr. George Frazier an instructor of any of those classes you mentioned?" Dr. Leighton replies, "no. Mr. Frazier's official position is that of a teaching assistant of those classes. As I informed you just a moment ago, Dr. Gregory, either Kathy Bogenskaya or myself is listed as the instructor of those classes." Backed into a corner, Dr. Gregory shuffles a few more papers, trying to think of a suitable response to Dr. Leighton.

Years ago, Dr. Gregory has discovered that Mr. Frazier has only a bachelor's degree and lacks any advanced degree, and therefore technically not qualified to be a professor at the university level. Being one of the highest paid employees at the University, Mr. Frazier is

unconcerned about his lowly academic title of *Teaching Assistant*. Mr. Frazier's only concern is winning. And, it is clear to Dr. Leighton that Dr. Gregory is looking for a technicality in order to bring a complaint against the University.

Recalling the past, and realizing he will get nowhere with the issue of the dual enrollment classes offered to high school students or the qualifications of the instructors, Dr. Gregory moves on to his third complaint, announcing, "another issue that seems to be a chronic departure from what is normal, Dr. Leighton, is the subject matter of theses leading to advanced degrees at your University." Ready for some entertainment, Dr. Leighton sarcastically replies, "really, Dr. Gregory? I don't know what goes on at your university, but any theses proposals and the granting of advanced degrees at our University falls under the academic program at our University, not the athletic program. So, I can't even begin to imagine to what you are referring. Will you please elaborate?"

Mr. Frazier sits back with his arms crossed, and whispers to Dr. Karakova, "I think Athena is all warmed up and is ready to rip Gregory to shreds." Dr. Karakova whispers back, "Gregory doesn't have a leg to stand on. Even he knows that. He's tried this angle a few times in the past. And, every time it's gotten him nowhere."

Continuing the heated yet superficially cordial exchange, Dr. Gregory, combating Dr. Leighton, complains, "let's just take a look at some of the thesis material from the past few academic years at your University. Thesis number one. *Commonly Available Performance Enhancing Supplements and Drugs and their Effect on Aerobic Performance*. Thesis number two. *Novel Techniques to Inappropriately Engage the Fight or Flight Mechanism Prior to Athletic Competition*. I think we've seen that topic a few times before. Thesis number three. *Chronic Engagement of the Fight or Flight Mechanism and its Detrimental Effects on Athletic Performance*. Thesis number four. *The Biochemistry of Mitochondrial*

*Proliferation in Muscle Tissue through Exercise Modification and Nutritional Supplementation, and the Resultant Performance Increases on the Athletic Field.* Thesis number five. *The Effect of Intense Exercise in Extreme Weather Conditions and its Relationship to Sympathetic / Parasympathetic Nervous System Tone.* Thesis number six. *Intensive Interval Training and its Causative Relationship to Angiogenesis in Tissue Undergoing a Shift from Aerobic to Anaerobic Metabolism and the Associated Neuroplasticity of the Efferent Peripheral Nerves.* Now, I don't know about anyone else here but, from what I understand from some of my colleagues, there is more to that particular thesis than is revealed in the research."

Kathy whispers to Athena, "what business are those theses of his? And, how is he bringing up my Ph.D. thesis?" Athena replies, "I can only imagine." Kathy, who got the idea from her counterpart in the red universe, went back to the University and got her Ph.D. in Exercise Science several years ago. Kathy's thesis was identical to her counterpart's thesis in the red universe. But, after all, it was, in a sense, her own work, just in a different realm.

Continuing with his complaint, Dr. Gregory confidently orates, "and, here's a very interesting thesis, Dr. Leighton. *The Metabolic Effects of Psychochubin on Athletic Performance on the Sports Field.* When one of our students was at your library, this particular thesis was found to be completely redacted, with the first page of the text reading, 'The material content of this thesis has been classified and is now unavailable to the general public.' I'm sure we can all agree that, by the title of this particular thesis and the redaction of the associated content, the material discussed in this thesis is surely suggestive of some sort of serious rule violation. And, I can't even begin to imagine what this Psychochubin substance is. It sounds like some type of elite performance-enhancing drug. And, in the title section, even the name of the student obtaining a doctorate degree from this research has been redacted."

Mark smiles, hearing Dr. Leighton tell Dr. Gregory, “the best person to address that particular thesis, Dr. Gregory, is Mark Svoboda. If you would like, I’ll let Mr. Svoboda address your concerns regarding that specific thesis because, be assured, sir, I will not be addressing it.” Not given much choice in the matter, Dr. Gregory replies, “I would certainly like to hear what Mr. Svoboda has to say. I’m sure everyone else in this room would also be interested.” Kathy, knowing what is coming, is trying her hardest not to crack up.

Mark takes the floor, explaining, “thank you for giving me the opportunity to discuss this very important subject. The thesis entitled *The Metabolic Effects of Psychochubin on Athletic Performance On the Sports Field* deals with a very specific distraction technique that is very effective not only on the sports field, but in many other environments as well.” Dr. Karakova, Mr. Frazier, Dr. Leighton, and Kathy sit back, curious to see how Mark will present his subject matter.

Mark advises the group, “to properly understand what this thesis is about, I’ll have to give you the history behind it.” Dr. Gregory, wanting the whole story, tells Mark, “please, Mr. Svoboda, go right ahead.” Mark continues, “back when I was in ninth grade, Dr. Zunde was my health class instructor. Dr. Zunde was discussing hallucinogenic drugs, and why they are dangerous. During the class, he discussed marijuana, LSD, and psilocybin. Back then, I didn’t know how to spell psilocybin, so Eddie Bogenskaya spelled it out for me. I’m sure you guys all remember Eddie. I told Eddie that I’m never going to remember psilocybin for the test. So, Eddie told me to do a word association thing. Back then, we had a crazy gym teacher, whose name was Mr. Chubin. Well, we thought he was crazy. But, he really wasn’t crazy. Mr. Chubin just pushed athletes to the limit of their physical performance, where gains are made. That’s why his cross country team was always undefeated back then, and still is today. But, anyway, Eddie told me, ‘psilocybin sounds like psycho Chubin. So, remember it that way, psilocybin - psycho Chubin.’ After Eddie

explained that to me, I got it down. When the test came, one question was 'List three hallucinogenic drugs.' So, I wrote marijuana, LSD, and psycho Chubin. Dr. Zunde thought that was kind of funny. So did the rest of the class. And, Pete Chubin is still at Northside High and is the cross country coach. He always has an undefeated season." Remembering the story about psycho Chubin quite well, Mr. Frazier laughs to himself, albeit very quietly.

In a somewhat angry tone and still in the dark, Dr. Gregory hastily asks, "exactly where are you going with this, Mr. Svoboda?" Mark firmly replies, "hey, chill out. I'm getting to that. I'm almost done." Mark continues, explaining, "so, getting back to the thesis on the subject of *The Metabolic Effects of Psychochubin on Athletic Performance on the Sports Field*, you really have to be a special kind of stupid to believe that was a real thesis topic. There's no such thing as Psychochubin. Me and Eddie made that up in ninth grade." Mark smiles, informing everyone, "that thesis was put in the library as a distraction technique, and it looks to me like it worked real well. Even you fell for it." Making Dr. Gregory appear like a complete fool, Mark expresses the silliest grin as laughter breaks out among the other teams' coaches.

A few minutes later, as the laughter and discussion finally subsides, Mark announces to the group, "there are a few other theses in our library that were placed there purely for distraction purposes. But, I'll let you guys figure out which ones they are. One of them sounds very technical and convincing, but it's really a bunch of mumbo jumbo techno-bullshit. Why don't you send a few of your spies over to our library to see if they can figure out which one it is?" Mark then takes his seat, prompting a few private discussions among the coaches regarding his unexpected explanation.

Once Mark is seated, Athena whispers to Mark, "I wasn't aware of any other theses placed in our library that were intended to be distractions to the spies." Mark replies, "there weren't any others that I know of. I just

made that up. I just messed with them again, and they didn't even know it." Athena, Mr. Frazier, Dr. Karakova, and Kathy all laugh hysterically, knowing that Mark is still the master of messing with people.

Still on the subject of theses, Athena asks Dr. Gregory, "what specifically, Dr. Gregory, was your concern regarding the thesis entitled *Intensive Interval Training and its Causative Relationship to Angiogenesis in Tissue Undergoing a Shift from Aerobic to Anaerobic Metabolism and the Associated Neuroplasticity of the Efferent Peripheral Nerves?*" Dr. Gregory replies, "it is my understanding that what is discussed in that thesis cannot occur without the use of anabolic steroids, and the part of the subject matter addressing anabolic steroids has been totally redacted from the thesis." Dr. Leighton replies, "well, Dr. Gregory, it might surprise you, but your understanding would be wrong." Dr. Gregory tells Dr. Leighton, "you sound very confident of yourself, Dr. Leighton." Dr. Leighton replies, "I should be confident. I was the faculty advisor for that research, and Dr. Kathy Bogenskaya, sitting with us here today, was the researcher." If Dr. Gregory even bothered to read the thesis, he would have known that.

Now wanting to hear more, Dr. Gregory asks, "can you discuss this topic with us, Dr. Leighton?" Dr. Leighton replies, "absolutely not." Dr. Gregory asks, "may I ask why not?" Dr. Leighton replies, "for two reasons. First, the subject matter discussed in the thesis is far more advanced than the ability of the average Ph.D. to comprehend. And secondly, I presume you can read. So, purchase a copy of the thesis and read it for yourself. Good luck understanding it."

During the verbal ping pong match between Dr. Leighton and Dr. Gregory, Mark whispers to Kathy, "the price of that thesis just went way up." Kathy replies, "yeah. But, it's not like he'd understand anything in it anyway." Kathy's father, Dr. Karakova, mentions, "and, not to mention, a lot of the pertinent research associated with Kathy's thesis is locked away in the exercise science

lab. Good luck to Dr. Gregory if he ever wants to see the research.”

Hearing her name mentioned, Kathy listens as Dr. Gregory tells Dr. Leighton, “perhaps we can get Kathy to discuss the subject matter with us.” Interrupting Dr. Gregory, Kathy boldly announces, “I’d be glad to. If we can get enough people to sign up, I’ll conduct a seminar. My fee will be two-thousand dollars per attendee.” Dr. Karakova quietly laughs under his breath at his daughter’s remark, knowing that many of the coaches in the room would rather continue to lose rather than pay for valuable knowledge that would better enable their teams to win.

Realizing he is getting nowhere with the University’s coaching staff, Dr. Gregory announces, “well, this looks like a good time to take a fifteen-minute break. When we return, we’ll discuss the schedule for the next academic year and review the applicants for the open meet official positions.” The University’s coaching staff takes a well-needed break, especially after discussing a few topics that should have never been on the agenda.

During the break, Mr. Frazier mentions to his group, “it looks like the spies are at it again. Honestly, I never expected them to find Mark’s thesis on psycho Chubin in the library.” Mark reassures Mr. Frazier, “I told you someone would find it.” Mr. Frazier smiles, and concedes, “well, it looks like I lost this bet.” Dr. Karakova curiously asks, “how much was the wager?” Mark replies, “the usual. A pizza.” Kathy informs her father, “that’s what all bets are. A pizza.” Dr. Karakova smiles, and replies, “I should have known.”

Returning from the break, Dr. Gregory calls the meeting to order, then announces, “I believe we can now move on to discussing the schedule for the next calendar year.” Sharply interrupting, Mr. Crumpler exclaims, “we haven’t finished discussing the audit of Dr. Leighton and Mr. Frazier’s University yet! There are still a lot of

unanswered questions!" Tired of the shit show, Mr. Frazier yells out to Mr. Crumpler, "fire away!"

Attempting to regain control of the meeting, Dr. Gregory yells out, "hold on, here. Hold on. What exactly is your concern, Mr. Crumpler?" Mr. Crumpler exclaims, "my concern? My concern is my team has absolutely nothing to look forward to in this Winter's divisional meet! It's the same thing every year. We, like many of you here, show up for the meet, and go home with nothing! Absolutely nothing!"

Not knowing how to respond to Mr. Crumpler nor really wanting to respond, Dr. Gregory asks the University's coaching staff, "would anyone like to take the opportunity to respond to Mr. Crumpler's concern?" Speaking for the University, Dr. Leighton bluntly replies, "no." Repeating Dr. Leighton's answer, Dr. Gregory replies, "no? That's it?" Dr. Leighton replies, "that is correct, sir. And, for the record, 'no' is a complete sentence, a discussion terminus, and does not need further elaboration, unless, of course, you're dealing with a three-year old." Laughter breaks out among the coaches, suggesting that Dr. Leighton is clearly winning this year's verbal battle.

Not liking the fact that his complaint is being shoved aside, Mr. Crumpler exclaims, "how can we have a dialog if Dr. Leighton won't even address the subject?" Still with no answers, Dr. Gregory looks at the University's coaching staff, and asks, "would anyone else care to respond?" Already agreeing ahead of time that they would not address the subject introduced by Mr. Crumpler, Mr. Frazier responds for the University's coaching staff, "Mark already answered your question earlier. Perhaps you missed it." Mr. Crumpler asks Mr. Frazier, "and, what exactly did Mark say?" Mr. Frazier tells Mr. Crumpler, "if I am not mistaken, Mark told you to 'train more.'" Mr. Crumpler sarcastically replies, asking, "train more? That's the answer? Train more?" Saving Mr. Frazier the trouble of responding, and taking Mr. Crumpler's question to be a statement, Mark quickly responds, "I'm glad you agree."

Mr. Crumpler stands up, angrily announcing, “doesn’t anyone get it? What is the point of my team showing up at a meet if we don’t even stand a chance of winning?” Mark also stands up, and responds to Mr. Crumpler, telling him and everyone else, “good observation on your part. If you don’t show up at the meet, you can’t possibly win.” Referring to Mark, Mr. Crumpler looks at Dr. Gregory, begging him, “can’t you do something about him?” Mark tells Mr. Crumpler, “hey, junior! I’m not the one having a shit fit here.”

Mentally defeated in dealing with Mark and the rest of the University’s coaching staff, Mr. Crumpler sternly informs Dr. Gregory, “I don’t think we can move on unless this subject is addressed, sir!” Again not knowing how to respond, Dr. Gregory tells Mr. Crumpler, “we’re apparently not making any forward progress on this subject, Mr. Crumpler. I plan to introduce the subject of another audit at the high-level divisional meeting later this Fall.” Mr. Crumpler reminds Dr. Gregory, “what good is that going to do? All of your audits have gotten us nowhere!” Mark whispers, “neither has your training,” which is heard by those at the adjacent tables as evidenced by the outburst of laughter.

The voice of another coach in the division is then heard announcing in a distinct Russian accent, “may I have something to say, Coach Gregory?” Gladly giving up the floor, Dr. Gregory replies, “go right ahead, Mr. Pushkin.” Mr. Viktor Pushkin, a Russian immigrant, whose team is the second strongest in the division, stands, and relates to his audience, “when I was back in Russia, I coached track and field at Moscow State University. When I came to this country, I coached high school track for a few years. I consider myself fortunate to have met George Frazier when I was coaching high school. We have been very good friends since. We speak many times during the year, and I have learned a lot from him.”

Dr. Gregory and the others in attendance are now wondering what Mr. Pushkin has to say. And, so is Mr. Frazier. Mr. Pushkin continues, explaining, “I don’t

believe, my friends, that these ceaseless audits and complaining will get you anywhere. I would strongly suspect that, should Mr. Frazier take a position as the track coach at your university, in a few years, your university will be winning just as much as Mr. Frazier's University is right now. Would your university complain then? The superior athletes all want to attend where there is the best coaching and winning teams. We see this all the time in football and basketball. No one can deny that. Why not in track and field?" Silence falls over the room, which is finally filled with logic rather than emotion.

Not hearing any response, Mr. Pushkin raises his voice, and continues, "now, listen to me, all of you! I have something very important to say to you. Until you tell high school students where they can and can't go to college, none of the complaining you are doing here will do you any good. Back in my home country, the freedom to choose your future is very limited compared to this country. You should be grateful for the freedoms that you do have in this country. Trust me. None of you want to go down the path of telling high school students what their future will be. I left all that behind. I don't want to see it again. Once in a lifetime is enough." Applause erupts as Mr. Pushkin takes his seat. Mr. Pushkin could say a lot more, but he apparently got his point across. And, it does appear that only three or four of the twelve universities in the division chronically air a complaint against the University since Mr. Frazier has been the head coach.

Athena whispers to Mr. Frazier, "he does have a very good point, George. Hopefully, what he said will put an end to this nonsense." Mr. Frazier replies, whispering, "I hope so, unless Mark has something more to say." Mr. Frazier seems to enjoy the yearly entertainment. So does Dr. Leighton. But, they can only take so much of Dr. Gregory's nonsense.

Mr. Pushkin's remarks have apparently caused Dr. Gregory to back down from his threats of scrupulous

audits, at least for the moment. The meeting moves on, with the attendees hoping to cover the remaining ground quickly, since most of them will have the remainder of the day off. Truth is, unnecessary audits cost universities money, money that is better spent elsewhere.

By mid afternoon, the meeting is adjourned, which could not have come soon enough for the University's coaching staff. Dr. Karakova gives the coaching staff the rest of the afternoon off. But, they all were planning to take the rest of the day off anyway.