Rosmini College 2026 Sports Captain's Address - Hunter Johns



Good evening everyone,
When I look back at my time at Rosmini College, one word comes to mind: unpredictable. Throughout my 7 years at Rosmini, there have been some incredible highs and some pretty tough lows. If there is one thing my journey has taught me, it's that success isn't measured only by results, but by what you learn when things don't go your way.

Like all my year 13 brothers, our sporting journeys at Rosmini did not start as we had planned. For two years in a row the AIMS Games, the peak of our intermediate sporting goals, were cancelled due to Covid. Although we missed out, AIMS continues to give our younger brothers a great launching pad for their sporting journeys at Rosmini.

In 2024, as a year 11, I was a part of teams that reached finals in both basketball and rugby. We finished runner up in the Auckland Premier basketball competition, runner up at basketball regionals, and runner up in the North harbour first XV competition, capping the year off with a bronze medal at basketball nationals.

2024 became the year of 'almosts'. The journey was not quite complete. For a year 11 boy with big dreams, 2024 left me wondering
"am I only just as valuable as numbers on a scoreboard?"

Then came 2025. Our premier basketball team qualified last at regionals for a spot at Nationals. In rugby, we made it all the way to the North harbour semi finals, but once again, things didn’t go exactly how we planned, drawing with Whangarei in the semi-final and missing out on a finals berth due to a few words in a rule book. Another year of what could have been.

However, 2025 ended on a high note when I was selected as part of the New Zealand U17 Junior Tall Blacks that beat Australia in the final of the Oceania World Cup qualifiers in Samoa - the first time a NZ U17 team had ever beaten Australia, a memory which will never be forgotten.

2026, my final year, started better than I could have imagined. Selected to go to Germany with the New Zealand U18 Junior Tall Blacks and signing an amateur contract with the Auckland Tuatara to play in the New Zealand NBL. It was starting to feel like the beginning of something special.

In May, a year of promise came to a startling halt when I tore my ACL leaving me with nothing but questions and a false sense of hope. And honestly, it has changed my life.

It hasn't just been about missing games. It's been about losing a central part of my everyday life: the training, the competition and being out there with your mates, battling for one another.
All of it, gone.

Over the past several months, there have been some really difficult moments. Moments that have put me in dark places making me question who I am without sport. When so much of your identity is tied to what you can do on a court or a field, it’s hard to know where you fit when you can no longer do those things. And as of now, I'm still working through that. I’ll be honest, I don’t have some perfect lesson or inspiring ending to

give you about my injury, because I’m still in the middle of it. But perhaps this is the point. I have been working hard to understand that maybe I am more than just a basketball player. More than my results, my performances, my selections, my achievements. And I think it is this that brings me back to what makes school sport so special.

Here at Rosmini, we get to play alongside our mates, our brothers, and for some - like me - literally our brothers. We get to represent something bigger than ourselves. Something which can be summed into one word: brotherhood. We get to share the wins, the losses, the bus rides, the changing rooms, the banter. All moments that probably seem ordinary at the time.

Some of the best parts of this journey have been playing alongside the boys I've worked hard with, struggled with, celebrated with and most of all grown up with. They've pushed me to be better and supported me through the tough times, making the whole journey worthwhile. When I look back, I know I will remember the tournaments, the trips, the achievements. But I will also remember the people who made the difficult seasons bearable and the good seasons unforgettable. And that is something that no result can take away.

This time last year, I remember sitting right there, thinking, “what will I say if I make it to this stage next year?” What I thought then, is much different to what is now on this paper. Although, there was one thing in which last year's sports captain Mattie Dalton said when he spoke about how special school sport is which really resonated with me. At the time, I understood what he meant, but I don’t think I truly appreciated it. Getting a taste of the professional sporting world this year opened my eyes to how different sport becomes at that level. Contracts, money, selection, performance, results. All of it secretly taking away from the reason people actually play the game.

Now there’s nothing wrong with pursuing a professional career, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities I have had - and hopefully will have to come.

But I have come to appreciate that school sport offers something that is difficult to replicate. So, I say to you all, embrace your sporting opportunities here at the college, as once you leave, you will realise that they may be some of your best sporting memories.

While we will never forget the memories we’ve made as teams across a range of sporting codes, it’s important to remember the MVPs off the court, field and pool. The team that supports us to get to practices, that bank rolls the uniforms and sports fees, and keeps the fridge endlessly stocked.

Tonight, it’s important to say a few thank you’s to some coaches who have made a huge impact on our lives, both on and off the sports field. For me, that's Theo, Sonny, Matt and Richard, I can't express how much you have taught me and helped shape me into the person that I am today. Thank you.

To all the teachers who have shown up to the late night and cold and early morning games. To the teachers who've supported me personally with genuine mentorship and encouragement. You guys know who you are. Thank you.

To my mates, my teammates, my brothers, thank you. Thank you for going out there to battle with me week in and week out. For the memories, the laughs, the tough times and for making every season worth it, and no matter where sport takes us from here, those are memories I'll always carry with me.

And lastly, Mum and Dad. Thank you for everything you've sacrificed to give me the opportunities in which I have been fortunate enough to receive. From the early morning drop offs to the late night pick ups, the support, and for being there through every high and every low, I am so grateful. Thank you for always backing me and allowing me to pursue something that I'm so passionate about. I know the sacrifices that come with that, and I hope I can continue to make you proud. I wouldn't be where I am today without you, and I'm forever grateful for everything you've done for me.

To the younger brothers here tonight, chase the wins, set the daring goals, work hard and represent the brotherhood with pride. There's absolutely nothing wrong with wanting to be the best and wanting to win. But what I will say is, don’t become so focused on that next win, that next selection, or that next achievement that you forget why you started playing in the first place. And when things don’t go your way, don’t let a disappointing season or moment convince you that you’ve failed, or that you’re worth any less because of it. I know it will be hard because I've been there. But keep working, keep improving and don't let one result define you.

Finally, my journey at Rosmini has been far from perfect. I’ve spent the past 7 years building my identity around being an athlete, and always wanting to be the best, to keep improving, to achieve more and more. And now, with basketball temporarily taken away from me, I am having to learn that I am so much more than just an athlete, and that who I am isn’t defined by what I achieve on the court. In my 7 years at the college there have been results I am proud of, results I am disappointed by, mistakes which I regret, as well as opportunities I never expected.

However, I wouldn’t measure my time here by a medal count, or a win - loss record. I would measure it by what I have learnt, the relationships I have built and the discovery of the new person inside of me.

Because success isn’t just about what you achieve when everything is going right. It’s about who you are and what you do when it isn’t, and knowing that your worth has never depended on numbers on a scoreboard.