**THE DIFFERENCE A ‘HEAD’ COACH CAN MAKE.**

On New Year’s Eve, I had the distinct pleasure of watching the College Football Championship Series Playoff between Alabama-Washington and Ohio State-Clemson. Alabama took care of business as usual. Clemson handled Ohio State in a surprising fashion, shutting out the Buckeyes 31-0. It was the first time that Urban Meyer had ever been shut out as a head coach.

On Jan. 9, the BCS Final will be played between Alabama and Clemson. Coach Dabo Swinney, brought his team back to the Finals after a heart breaking loss to Alabama last year in the BCS, 45-40. This promises to be a game for the ages. Although one would think that there would be a blood feud between Nick Sabin and Dabo, they actually fish together in the off season, down here in Palm Beach County.

My business partner, Chet Tart, and I had a particular interest in the Clemson-OSU game. You see both teams use a “Head’ Coach and it’s not Urban and Dabo. Yes they are THE head coach of each of their programs. The “Head”coach we are talking about, works with is that 14 lb bowling ball that sits on your neck. He teaches ATTITUDE, SELF TALK, RESILIENCE, VISION, TEAM BUILDING, ETC.

For OSU, it is Tim Kight and his son, Brian. For Clemson, it is Jon Gordon.

I first read about the Kight’s in an article in Sports Illustrated after the 2014 BCS National Championship. Usually the post game articles highlight a momentum shift or a particular player or unit’s play. In this article, Tim Kight’s contribution as a “head’ coach kept being mentioned.

As a leadership coach with the John Maxwell Team, I reached out to Tim in an email.

He graciously responded and we have developed a friendship/working relationship.

To refresh your memory…OSU lost their second string QB in a win over their rival Michigan. This meant that OSU had to win the Big10 conference championship as well as beat Alabama and Oregon to win the National Championship with a 3rd string QB who had yet to take a snap in a game.

All 3 of OSU’s victories were over teams that featured equally talented athletes. Our premise is that talent alone is never enough. Given that all things being equal, the difference is what’s going on between the ears. That’s where the ‘head’ coach comes in.

Clemson, also works with a ‘head’ coach by the name of Jon Gordon. You may have read his best seller, The Energy Bus. Chet and I have worked with Jon, through the World Leaders Conference held annually in Palm Beach. Clemson had to beat OSU to get to play Alabama again. They did and now that game looms on the horizon.

But back to the Clemson-OSU game. Clemson destroyed OSU, 31-0. Does that mean that

Clemson’s ‘head’ game was stronger than OSU’s? We don’t think so. In this instance all things were not equal. OSU had outkicked it’s coverage. OSU was up against a veteran team.

I spoke with Tim Kight after the game. He told me something we weren’t aware of. Did you know that OSU was the youngest team in College football, 43 freshman? And that they lost 12 guys to the NFL last year. They overachieved. At the beginning of the season, no one expected them to be sitting at 11-1 and in the Playoffs. In the Clemson game, OSU ran into the reality of the talent gap between a veteran Clemson defensive line and a young OSU offensive line. At some point, size/speed/experience make the difference.

The reason OSO’s young team was even in the playoffs was because of its attitude, resilience, and mental training. That’s what a ‘head’ coach provides. That’s the take away here. Everyone needs a ‘head’ coach not just football players. Do you have a ‘head’ coach in your life?

The BSC game on Jan. 9 should be interesting and exciting. Alabama also works with a ‘head’ coach by the name of Trevor Moawad, who also happens to work with Russell Wilson, the Seattle SeaHawks QB. Alabama has a young team as well, especially at QB.

The ‘secret sauce’ at the elite level is the ‘head’ coach.

We shall see, on Monday night.