

“My Left Hook Just Does That”

“Sorry dude, my left hook just does that sometimes”. If you have ever sparred with Chris “The Christian Warrior” Wells, you have heard him say this. Having known Wells for close to two years now, I have become very familiar with his left hook. In fact, two weeks before my last fight, Wells reintroduced me to his left hook, leaving me with a gash under my right eye that required stitches and left a scar. Now every time I look in the mirror I am reminded that “my left hook just does that”.

Being that I did not grow up in the same state as Wells, I did not have the opportunity to know him as a younger man during his reckless, wilder years. If you go to Middletown, Ohio, where Wells was born and raised and still resides, the man is as close to a legend as you will find. I have had the opportunity to become very close friends with Wells during the past two years, and I have seen first hand how walking around Middletown with Wells can become an all day affair. You will not go anywhere in that town where someone does not know Wells. I have gone to the local grocery store with him for a gallon of water that turned into an hour of people coming up to him and reminiscing about the old times.

From all my conversations with Wells over the past few years I can tell you that the Chris Wells of today and the Chris Wells of his youth are as about as polar opposite as you will find. I have heard all the stories of how young Wells was teased and taunted as a child playing in his yard when that switch turned on and brought out the beast. On one occasion, Wells was playing with his plastic army men in the dirt near his home when some older boys from the neighborhood came by on their bikes and taunted him throwing rocks at him and then sped off. That switch went off in Wells’ head, so he picked up the first thing he saw laying around which was a brick. He heaved it at the older bullies and connected with one of the boy’s head, knocking him off his bike and sending the bully home crying. The older boys from the neighborhood quickly realized not to pick on the younger Chris Wells. During his youth Wells would fight at the drop of a hat to defend his honor and that of his family. He was what you might call a loose cannon.

During his high school years at Middletown High he was a star football player. Wells was a 1st Team All State middle linebacker his senior year and from all accounts was a terror on the football field. He was feared by all, known for his relentless pursuit of excellence and unmatched fury. For Wells, football was an outlet. For like many young men in southern Ohio, Wells had a troubled youth and football was his ticket out of small town Ohio. But as talented as Wells was on the field, that switch was hard for him to control off the field of play. Wells was kicked off two Ohio high school all star football teams for fighting with teammates. Never the less, Wells earned himself that ticket out of small town Ohio and earned a full athletic scholarship to Kent State University to play college football.

Wells went on to Kent State and earned that reputation as someone you do not mess with. During a bus ride on campus, Wells was taunted by some older players on the team. They told Wells he was not good enough, to short and little to play middle linebacker for their team. These comments cut into that honor he so deeply prized and made Wells see red. When the bus stopped the older bullies got off with Wells and a

scuffle broke out. Wells ended up breaking the young man's nose with one shot to the face and then chased his teammate through the snow all the way across campus to the team facility where the antagonist hid from Wells behind a locked door. This little incident led to a meeting with the head coach of Kent State and Wells. The head coach went on to curse Wells and belittle the young man from Middletown, Ohio. During the verbal attack by the coach Wells jumped from his chair in the coaches' office, grabbed a decorative football helmet the coach had on his desk and slammed it on the desk yelling at his coach "this is all I need coach, just give me one of these and everything else will take care of itself"! The bewildered coach was left speechless as Wells turned and walked out of the office.

After his freshman year at Kent State Wells transferred to smaller Division III power Thomas More College. The Kent State coach never got over the young Wells' outcry, and it led to Wells leaving for a more unbiased coaching staff. Wells went on to be a 1st Team All American linebacker at Thomas More and led them to an undefeated senior campaign. Wells led his team in tackles and set records on bench press at 440lbs and squats at 550lbs. After his playing days at Thomas More, he stuck around and coached there for a few years before returning to Middletown High School to teach and coach.

In 2006, Wells was offered a job at Hamilton High School in near Hamilton, Ohio, to coach for his former high school coach and mentor, Coach Jim Place. Wells jumped at the opportunity to work for his former coach and is the head assistant coach and teacher at Hamilton High School. I have had the opportunity to work with Wells and his team and also talk to his classes about my time in the Army and my tour of duty in Iraq, and I am amazed at how the kids flock to Wells. Wells is a wonderful teacher and the single best football coach I have ever been around, and I played football since I was a young man into college. He brings a fire and intensity that I have never seen. When game day comes Wells changes, you can see it in his eyes. The fury, intensity and unbridled fire come to the forefront and his players feed off him.

I was with the team for the opening game of the season this year and was in the locker room for the pre-game speech. When it was Wells' turn to speak, the lights were off in the locker room, and the team went still in anticipation of what Coach Wells was going to do. Wells ran into the darkness and let out a warrior scream; the team went crazy and started screaming along with Wells. He ripped apart a gallon of water and started throwing the water all around drenching himself with it. He ripped his shirt off and began jumping around with his warriors screaming the battle cry the whole time. His team was engulfed with the intensity of Coach Wells! Every hair on my body stood at attention as I was covered with goose bumps. I wanted to put on a helmet and play for Wells that night, but the team did not need me as they went on to win 35-6.

Wells brings that same intensity he has for football to MMA. Wells fights for Team Jorge Gurgel and has been with Jorge since the beginning. He is a brown belt under Jorge and is 8-2 as a professional fighter at 170lbs. He has the brute strength of an ox and the explosive power to topple men twice his size. I do not know a single man who enjoys sparring with Wells because of his brute strength and explosive power. Wells does not seem to know the meaning of going light, although he truly believes he takes it easy on his sparring opponents. He may be right, he may not go as hard as he can during

work outs, but I know from first hand experience that if that switch in his head goes off, it is going to bring the pain with it. I have the scar on my face to prove it.

Throughout the two years my wife and I have lived in West Chester, I have come to know Wells very well. He started off as my strength coach and has turned into a man I am proud to call my friend. Wells has calmed a bit in his years but still has that fire in him for competition. Wells is a devout Christian and always has his Bible with him. He is quick with a smile and a helping hand. Wells is the type of man who would literally give you the shirt of his back and never turns on a friend in need. He is quiet until you get to know him, and then he shares those stories of his youth- stories that urban legends are made of. He may not be throwing bricks at bully's heads anymore, but I can tell you that you may chose to be hit in the head by a brick rather than hear, "sorry dude, my left hook just does that sometimes".

Article written by Matt Dunlap.