

## Things I Have Learned From College Coaching

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### Coaching:

- Never, ever forget who has been a positive influence on you and who has helped you get to where you are. Make sure you thank them and then do the same for someone else!
- Be *detailed*...with everything!
- "Don't coach for the name on your business card" (Larry Shyatt). Coach for your team, players, and head coach.
- Great question to ask yourself every day, "What does my team need right now?" (Herb Sendek)
- Have an edge... even when you win a few in a row.
- Treat wins like losses and losses like wins.
- It's hard to be a young assistant; you have to earn players respect without putting yourself on their level.
- Keep practices short in the 2nd semester. Make them want more and keep them hungry.
- "One bad apple can spoil the bunch." Chemistry is vital to success.
- It's not a good feeling to have a quiet team. You must demand energy and enthusiasm.
- "Never lose a chemistry guy" (Doc Rivers)
- Care about the players that aren't playing a lot because it's hard for them to stay motivated late in the year.
- Be careful what you tell your head coach. Don't make something out of nothing.
- Keep your players together. They can be mad at the staff, but they have to stay together.
- Tell players something positive every single day.
- "If you wanna win the race, you gotta feed the horses." Feed them well and get them what they want on the road.
- Sometimes it's best to "flush" a game after a bad night and start new the next day. Just don't make a habit of it.
- Rebounding wins games. Always have one assistant watching/coaching rebounding.
- If you stat it, chart it, or emphasize it, it will be important to your team (deflections, charges, turnovers).
- Keep scouting reports specific and simple. Players don't remember most of it anyway!
- Make time for your own exercise. It keeps you sane and players respect it.
- There are plenty of great coaches out there willing to help you if you just ask for it.
- Most people want to coach college because they want to do the *big* things (be on TV, recruit on the road, have input on game day). But great coaches are willing to do the little things (sweep the floor, check classes, open the gym late). The ones that do the small things are the ones who keep a job and move up the ladder.
- Prepare for additional responsibility and for your next position. You have to be *ready* to produce.
- "Let mad go." (Chuck Daly) It doesn't bother the players as much as it bothers you.
- It is vital you double check *everything* (especially for travel and video).
- Good assistants take care of the minor stuff so the Head Coach does not have to worry about it (players on time, ankle braces, gear, etc.). Allow him/her to focus on coaching the team!
- Find 30 minutes a day to spend on you: personal development, phone calls to friends/family, networking, reading, etc.
- Don't trust players when you ask them about academics. You will *never* get the whole truth.
- "Thoroughly study the game." (Kevin Eastman) You will earn players respect by knowing the game and knowing your system.
- Assistants do a better job when they are actively involved. Assign them specific responsibilities.
- Let strength coaches take care of "in-season" weight training. Coaches need to get away from the players and players need to be away from the coaches.
- It's better to make friends than enemies. Don't burn bridges in this business. Everyone remembers the person who screwed them over or didn't return a call.
- If you have extra game tickets...give them away! People love college athletics, players love fans at their games.
- Make time to read during the season. It's a great way to find messages/stories/examples to give to your team!
- Appreciate your job and the opportunity you have. Your head coach probably gets over 100 emails a year asking for an opportunity to be on his/her staff. You are lucky to be called "coach."
- "If you really like something another coach/team does... steal it...but give credit" (Tom Izzo)
- "If you steal something, make sure you can teach it" (Hubie Brown)

### Team:

- Toughness is one of the most underrated characteristics of championship teams. You need talent, athleticism, and skill... but toughness gets you through the year. Mental toughness and physical toughness.
- Teams that consistently win on the road are tough. They have a "Tough, Together, and Aggressive mindset."
- Make sure your best players are your hardest workers. MJ was. Kobe is. The other players will follow their example.
- Your team leader doesn't have to be the most energetic or the most out spoken, but they have to be competitive, and lead by example (think Jason Kidd or Kevin Durant).
- Your best players have to "buy in." Get them to buy in and believe what you and your program is all about... toughness, togetherness, sharing the basketball, competitiveness. Other players will follow if they do!
- Your team can only play one game at a time and can only win one game at a time...especially at the end of the year when standings are close, or in the playoffs/tournaments. Focus should be "win your next game!"

### **Players:**

- It's more important to have your players mentally prepared than worry about their legs on back-to-back nights.
- Keep your team healthy; provide waters/granola bars/fruit instead of donuts and burgers.
- Players *want* to be pushed. They will take your criticism as long as you tell them how good they can become.
- Players are around each other all the time (practice, class, road trips, and roommates). It is important they like each other and respect each other.
- Players love hearing about the "next level." Study and research what the great players do and have info, articles, and examples for them. This helps get your point across.
- Players look at the other team's stats, standings, and schedules more than you think. *Keep them focused on their standings, their schedule, and their performance.* There is not enough time to worry about what you can't control.

### **Recruiting:**

- Do not trust *anybody*...everyone wants players. This is a ruthless business.
- Recruit high character kids. Bad kids will be bad kids.
- Don't take a player you can't coach or isn't about what your team is about just because they are more talented. You will hate coaching them.
- Make sure you say "we" instead of "me" in recruiting.
- Know the recruiting rules...if you're not sure about something you better ask!
- Don't jump to conclusions on recruits. Make sure you have the right evaluation and take the time to do exactly that...evaluate!
- When you recruit players be prepared to give them time to adjust to your level, learn your system, and gain confidence. Don't lose hope...be patient. They *will* get it.

### **Shooting:**

- Recruit shooters and shot makers...it's hard to win games with players that can't shoot.
- It doesn't matter what you run if you can't shoot!
- You can never have enough shooters. Teams are hard to beat when 4 out of 5 players on the floor can shoot well.
- Shooters need to shoot every day! Allow them to get extra shots before/after practice and on days off.
- Extra free throws will help player's rhythm/stroke during the season and will save their legs. Great time to get eyes on the basket and regain focus. Shoot them daily.
- Have shooting games/competitions before and after practice to get in reps under pressure.
- During shooting workouts, emphasize where they should be shooting from. Game shots, from game spots, at game speed...especially shots *they* get in *your* offense.
- Don't over coach shooting. Keep it simple. Kevin Eastman only coaches "perfect feet, perfect follow through." Find out what's most important for your shooters and leave it at 1 or 2 things.

### **Basketball:**

- Keep your last second plays the same and have them rehearsed regularly (special situations during practice).
- Keep your ball screen defense simple but be ready to adjust.
- Have a plan for block outs on free throws.
- Penetrate and kick is a very effective offense.
- Every practice make sure you emphasize they pace you want your team to play and setting great screens.

- If your post players aren't great at scoring at the block have them "cut and fill" instead of "stand and post." This keeps the help defenders occupied from the movement.
- Do not let players throw back on a 2 on 1...most times it ends up as an offensive foul.
- Take 2 to 3 minutes to emphasize a core principal when warming up. EX: "Closeout hard and stay down on shot fakes tonight."
- In scouting: players care more about opponents personnel than the actions the team is running. They will remember other player's tendencies because they want to be better than that player! Be detailed about this.
- Practice "bluffing" or "stunting" (quick/fake help) every week in a variety of situations. Players will start to see more opportunities to do this during live action.
- It's important to drill defensive principles *every single day!* "Practice what you emphasize"
- 3 keys to be in every game: transition defense, rebounding, turnovers.
- Work on transition defense every single day. "We run... they don't!"
- "Simple plays are great plays." You don't need a homerun to be successful.
- Going for shot fakes will result in points or fouls almost 90% of the time.
- When guarding motion make sure players engage in the entire action; not just guarding their man.
- Rebounding: the more you chase the more you get.
- Pass and move... never pass and stand/watch. This must become a habit.
- Find common terminology for your entire staff and players to use. Different terminology will result in confusion.
- Have a counter play or 2<sup>nd</sup> option for your best play.
- Make sure to have a "come from behind" plan. Even if you are not a pressing/trapping team, you have to have something for the last 2 minutes if you are behind.
- Individual workouts: It's a great time to reinforce the same message your head coach sends in practice.
- Practice and emphasize "game changing plays". Ex: Taking a charge, offensive rebound kicked out for a 3, chasing down a wide open lay-up, offensive rebound at the FT line. Create momentum changers!!!
- Always look for a new "competitive" drill (keeping track of time or score) late in the season. It helps keep practice fresh and players look forward to it.