



BASKETBALL COACHING NUGGETS

VOLUME 6

Important

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Introduction

What follows is a collection of tidbits, hand-outs, and notes I have gathered from some of the game's most brilliant minds. I am thankful to be a part of the coaching fraternity and want to do my part to spread quality information.

I am not the author of this material, but have gathered it from a variety of sources, and am just paying it forward.

If you did not receive this document directly from me (it was forwarded to you by a colleague), you can use the following link to register for future monthly editions:

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If you have any 'basketball nuggets' you would like to submit – please email them directly to me at:

Alan@StrongerTeam.com

I appreciate your support. Work on your craft every day and enjoy the journey,

Alan Stein

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Secrets to Building a Championship Basketball Program

By: Don Meyer

Segment 1

Try to get all the good ideas you can, understand you cannot use all the good ideas.

Write everything down that you can and then decide what will fit your program, personality, your personnel, your state, your region, and your league.

3 Requirements:

- 1.) Everybody takes notes. The richest 500 people in the United States shared the fact they take great notes.
- 2.) Everybody is courteous. Must say thank you, please, yes sir, no sir. When you are courteous it pays and when you are discourteous you pay. Every person that is part of an organization that comes into contact with the public is a salesman. Every person in your program is a salesman and you have to teach everyone in your program to be courteous. If everyone is not courteous your program is going to pay.
- 3.) Everyone picks up trash. You leave the locker room cleaner than you found it. On the great teams, everyone does the dirty jobs. (i.e. – take charges, dive on the ground for loose balls) Everyone has to do the dirty jobs on great teams starting with the coaches.

Keeping an Edge on Your Program:

You have got to keep your team on a sharp edge. If you have to try hard too try hard, you are already beat. As a coach, you have to clean the hog house everyday. If you do not clean the crap out everyday, you will never be able to wade through it. Everyday as a coach you have to come in jacked-up and have an edge. You have to be willing to grind it out everyday. When you lose that edge, it is time to get out of coaching.

You have to go from good to great because you have to realize good is the enemy of great. If you accept good, you will never have great. You have got to expect greatness, inspect for greatness, and accept only greatness. You get what you expect, inspect, and accept.

Wooden: “You can always do it better.” You can never be satisfied. Never let the players or coaches become satisfied because you can always do it better.

Keeping a Personal Edge as a Coach

You have to have time by yourself to have that edge. You got to have solitude. You got family, you got coaching, and

you got that third place where nobody can get to you. This place is where you can study, think, or pray. You pray first for others than yourself.

The beginning of wisdom is to know that you are not so smart. Humility comes before honor.

Wise people are humble.

You can never retire. You have to find something to occupy yourself for entire life. The saddest day of your life is when you are no longer productive. You have got to keep an edge.

If you do not have leadership at the top, your program is in terrible shape. We know what leadership is by the absence of it.

Talent always rises to the top. Having a team, always stay at the top. A man bent on revenge must first dig two graves.

It pays to be a winner.

John Wooden would bring in his leaders of his team and say three things:

- 1.) You have to be our hardest workers.
- 2.) You have to take care of stuff off the floor. (Take care of all the little crap before it becomes big crap.)
- 3.) Leave everything else to the coaches.

If your best player is not your hardest worker it will be a miserable year even if you win it all.

You need to know on your team who your players would put in a foxhole with them. You do not put someone in your foxhole you do not really trust.

Building Your Staff

There is probably nothing more important you will do than selecting your staff. Tell me who a guy's three assistants are and I will tell you how his career will end up. Loyalty is the number one thing you got to have. There two kinds of people that will get you as far as loyalty. The first one is the gossip. The gossip will say things behind your back that they would never say to your face. A more dangerous one is the flatter. The flatter says things to your face that they will

never say behind your back. When people are blowing smoke up your butt you better be careful. It can tell a lot about the people on your staff by how they treat people who can't do anything for them or to them.

A lot of coaches would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism. A good friend tells you what you need to hear not what you want to hear.

Warren Buffett on hiring looks for three things:

- 1.) Work Ethic
- 2.) Intelligence
- 3.) Character

The first two without the last one will kill you. The person without character will destroy everything you are trying to do. It takes time and experience to be good at your craft.

Types of people to hire on your staff:

- 1.) a person who is older, more experienced and has been through some of the things you have not been through and you can bounce things off of.
- 2.) somebody about your age, really good person, someone who is a moral compass that will not allow you to do something really stupid to destroy your own program.

- 3.) a younger guy who has a lot of potential. You will become a better coach by helping this younger coach become a better coach.

Your staff must learn about points of contact. When you meet someone you do not talk about yourself. People want points of contact beyond a name.

Who's helping you when you aren't there? That is public relations. Who is buying time for you or putting in a good word for you when you are not there?

4 Types of Coaches:

- 1.) Unconscious and incompetent – He does not know he doesn't even know. He is completely clueless.
- 2.) Conscious and incompetent – He knows he doesn't know.
- 3.) Conscious and competent – This is the coach that knows but there is no flow. Everything is just right down the line and by the book. This coach can be called anal. One thing about anal coaches, they will always have good teams. They will have good teams when they have poor players and they will have good teams when they have great players. They will never have great teams because they are anal. They will never let the kid do what he does best. That coach has to have his thumb on everything.
- 4.) Unconscious and competent - He knows and it flows. It is spontaneous. Does not even have to think about it, it is so engrained. This type of coach has worked their butt off to get there.

3 Rules from Jerry Krause:

- 1.) Find your unique talent or gift. What is your unique talent or gift?
- 2.) Develop your talent or gift to the highest possible level. People do not pay for average.
- 3.) Give that gift away everyday. The only buzz your going to get in life is giving your gift away.

Two lessons from the book War and Peace:

- 1.) You can measure a person by how they respond to a challenge.
- 2.) All great empires are destroyed within. The quickest way for program to be destroyed is from within. One, two bad apples and it is over.

Bump Phillips on the two kinds of coaches:

- 1.) Them that has been fired.
- 2.) Them that is going to be fired.

Sometimes the greatest badge a coach can have is to be fired for taking a stand that an administrator would not take, but you will because it involves your kids.

A good administrator never gives a good coach a reason to leave. A bad administrator gives that good coach a reason several times day to leave.

Don't wrestle a pig because you both get muddy and the pig likes it. When the administrator starts going onk-onk, back away and stay above the fray.

You have to work around some obstacles. Some administrators are road blocks. If you have a good administrator be thankful.

Father Hessberg: "I don't make good decisions because they are convenient, easy, or popular. I make them because they are right." That is a great administrator and a great coach.

Tough Times:

- 1.) The grass is always greener over the sewer.
- 2.) No matter how bad you have it, someone has it worst.

Everybody you meet must be treated with kindness, respect, and with courtesy. They maybe fighting a battle inside that you know nothing about. Peace is not the absence trouble, trials, or torment but it is calm in the midst of them."

"Keep alert, stay calm, and do not be afraid." These are things Coach Meyer says to himself and as coaches we need to do.

You have to be thankful for tough times because necessity is the mother of invention. You learn more basketball from losses than wins.

"F" Words

Faith means the assurance of things not seen. Family

Friends – You got to have a team of left tackles. People who are looking out for everybody else's blindside. Sometimes people do not know they are going to get blindsided so they need that protection.

You do not have to measure my thoughts or words when I am with my friends.

Fitness – As coach's exercise is your second job. You have to be physically fit so that you are mentally fit.

Finances - You have got to take care of your family, charity, and savings.

Figure it out for yourself.

Discipline

"Nothing is more harmful to the team than the neglect of discipline for that discipline more than talent or athleticism gives one team, superiority over another."

That does not mean your team has to play slow but they have to be disciplined. They have to do the right thing.

Planning and Organization

Plan, Prepare, Practice and play as if you just lost your last game. – Lon Kruger

You can tell when a coach has lost their last game, watch them practice.

www.plannerpads.com - go to where it says how it works – has a weekly planner that is really good

Plan the week on Sunday. For your program, family, faith. Plan the next day the night before.

Getting Things Done by David Allen (best book Meyer has ever read on planning)

Team Building

T = Toughness (no coach has ever said his team was too tough) E = Effort

A = Attitude (all you can control is effort and attitude)

M = Motives (some kids work hard for themselves, some kids work hard for the team) S= Servant Leaders (if you can develop servant leaders, you will have a great team)

Team Building Requirements

- 1.) Shared Ownership – You got to have people who invest in your team. You cannot have mercenaries. You cannot have renters. They must invest in the team.
- 2.) Shared Suffering – Nothing brings people together like suffering. Practices have to be tougher than the games, mentally and physically.
- 3.) Individual Responsibility – Test kids. You want to see if the kid is accountable. The only time they use the word individual in their program is in front of the word responsibility.
- 4.) Collective Pride – They want to hear the words we, our, & us. Never sacrifice toughness and attitude to get size and quickness.

Internal leadership on your team is crucial. You can pick captains but you cannot pick leaders. Just because you designate captains does not mean they are the leaders. Leadership emerges. You have got to teach your leaders.

Running A Program

Perform a need assessment. When you get the job say here is what is and subtract that from what it needs to be. Be visionary. You must see the picture, sell the picture, and then paint the picture. Everybody has got to paint the picture. Biggest mistake we make as coaches is trying to pain the picture ourselves.

Lamar Hunt:

- 1.) Decide what you want.
- 2.) Find out what it will cost to get what you want.
- 3.) Decide if you want to pay what it will cost.

You better make sure you know what the heck you are dealing with. Pick battles big enough to fight small enough to win.

With your team work with one minute assessments: Here is one thing you guys are doing well and why. Here is one thing we can do better and how.

Socratic Method

You want to ask questions, questions, and more questions. Don't give your team answers, ask questions.

William Safire: The greatest teacher makes a simple few points. The powerful teacher leaves one or two fundamental truths. The memorable teacher makes the point not by telling but by helping the students discover on their own. Learning takes place through discovery not when you are told something but when you figure it out for yourself. All a really fine teacher does is make suggestions, point out problems, and above all asks questions and more questions. Teaching not only encourages discovery but imitative.

Don't whine, don't complain, don't make excuses.

Those who can't or won't compete, complain. The biggest complainers you have are the sissies who do not want to work.

When something bad happens to you, do not say why me, say what now. N.B.A. (Next Best Action)

Work Hard. Work Smart. Work Together.

Practices

A coach's job is to stimulate game conditions. You must practice the game in which the manner it is played.

Play. Coach. Officiate. Before the season starts, he has players circle which one of these they want to do. No player is good enough to both officiate and play.

Process over the product. Quit worrying about results, worry about the process and the results will take care of themselves.

Look for teachable moments.

Use informal learning. Have them over for a cookout, watch football, go on a retreat. Have a meeting with having a meeting.

Tony LaRussa: "I want to touch 1/3 of my team a day." Teaching

Praise, prompt, and leave.

Praise = Praise to get their attention. Prompt = correct them.

Leave = do not stand over top of them. Keep them in the corner of your eye but do not stand over the top of them.

As a coach do not give instructions that could be understood. As a coach only give instructions that cannot be misunderstood.

At the end of every year, pretend you just got fired. This may help with the energy we have for the job.

Career Stages

- 1.) Survival - Remember every parent would rather their son be all state than the team win states.
- 2.) Success
- 3.) Satisfaction
- 4.) Significance – this is the most danger stage. Everybody wants to tear you down.
- 5.) Suspense – no more juice in your tank.

Are we tough enough? Are we athletic enough? Are we mature enough? Are we skilled enough? It is your job to improve your players in those areas every day.

They give their post players 4 seconds to get down the floor and seal the defensive. If they don't, they come out. That will jump start your offense.

You must run but not gun. You must run every time you get the ball to get an easy basket. Dick Bennett: The ball side makes your defense tough. The help side makes it successful. Defense - these are words his players understand.

- 1.) Stance
- 2.) Vision – allows you to move to position.
- 3.) Position
- 4.) Communication - Talk your position.
- 5.) Anticipation
- 6.) Movement According to our Rules

Keep your notes by last name. Retrieve, Review, and Reinforce.

Fundamentals & Drills for Shooting Improvement

4 Shooting Devices...

- 1.) The Gun
- 2.) The Noah Machine
- 3.) Toss Backs
- 4.) Reduced Rim

They do wrist extensions. Players get on knees, palms on ground, and they make a wrinkle with their wrists. They are trying to get wrist flexion. The more you can lay your wrist back, the better your range and touch is.

Lay on your back. Get your elbow right next to your body. Get a high, one second follow through, every time. Kinesthetic feel, your elbow needs to be in. Lay your wrist back. Follow all the way through (reach in the cookie jar). Do not spread your hand on the ball, it limits your wrist flexion. Make a V with your hand.

Lay-on-your back shooting drill (now with the ball). Pop the ball up there and catch it. Shoot it up there so you can hold your follow through without the ball hitting you in the face.

How quick you can get the ball to your shooting pocket is really important. Players who dip the ball are going to have a hard time getting the ball off against good players. The ball will be stripped or pressured.

Segment Two

Strip & Pressure. If the shooter is left handed you strip the ball with your right hand and challenge/pressure with your left. Vice versa for a right handed shooter. Hit the outside half of the ball. Do not hit the top of the ball, they will call that afoul. By hitting the outside half of the ball it will hit the off the offensive player's leg and go out of bounds. Tim Gurgiwich: Sit into your game.

Keep the ball in your pocket. Do not drop / dip it.

Bank Shots: The ball should hit the backboard on the way down. You do not want to be short on the bank shot. When you can see rim beyond the board, not more than half of the rim, or between the box and the hash.

To be a scorer, you must get your feet ahead of your hands. You have to be mentally tough to be a scorer.

You have a shooting hand and a balance hand. You do not have a guide hand. It is a balance hand. You do not want the balance hand interfering with the shot. You want the good backspin on the ball. Do not allow the balance hand to interfere with the backspin.

Target: Shoot for the back half of the basket. Have you ever seen a swish go through the front end of the basket? They want every shot to go through the back half of the basket.

Shooting: Keep the ball straight. On every shot his players miss, they are saying keep it straight or back half. His players have to talk the shot.

Before and after every practice his players form shoot. They are to make 3 to 4 swishes in a row before moving to the next spot.

On each shot they are to frame the shot. The player is to see the target between the balance hand and the shooting hand.

Your arch needs to be consistent. You have to have a consistent arch every time. The minimum arch is 43 degrees going into the basket. Maximum is 55 degrees. You do not have much room to play with arch.

In shooting drills, his players always get a bonus point for swishes. Never back off your shot.

Shooting: Mass Practice or Distributive Practice.

Mass Practice is the same thing over and over and over.

A "dead three" takes more than of his/her shots from behind the 3-point line. Knees bent, hand targets.

Shot fake: Have eyes on target and go about an inch with your hands and then go into your move. On rips: Tight action across your body. The ball does not have to go all the way to the floor. Segment 3:

Make 25 threes without missing two in a row. If you miss two in a row and swish the third one you get to keep going. "Be an athlete. Be quick on your feet."

You want to land about 6 inches closer to the basket after you shoot the ball. Date everything you do. You will want to know when you wrote it.

Power shots: Teach ten toes to the baseline

Follow through: The follow is your signature on your shot. Pre-game warm-up is a practice.

You need to catch the ball just like you are going to shoot it. If you are right handed, do not have your right foot back. You have to have the same delivery every time.

10 Pointers for Winning the State Championship

1. Get there
 - Gear for it. Everything is pointing to getting there! "Practice to beat the best" - Dick Bennett
 - Must have a system to accomplish that, Chuck Daly had that system with the Pistons and stick to it. Princeton plays to beat the best
2. When your team gets there - it's not a big deal.
 - Don't make it a big deal. A big deal is winning the championship. Our Attitude: We are going there to win!!
3. Do what you did to get there.
 - Freak out with changes vs. Faith in the system.
 - Ordinary players making ordinary plays every time = extraordinary players
 - On a good team, two players will do the dirty jobs (take charges, get on the floor, etc). On GREAT teams, all the players and coaches do the dirty jobs.
4. Be Aggressive.
 - Look for ways to win.
 - Play to win, don't play not to lose.
 - Pete Newell like to press on the first possession and he wasn't a press coach. He just wanted to come out and be aggressive early in the game.
 - Avoid Super Bowl Stupor.
5. Rest.
 - Mentally and physically; short, intense practices.
 - Duke goes dummy in tournament practice. No real contact. more gold medals are lost by overtraining than undertraining.
6. Give no easy baskets.
 - No lay ups - no uncontested shots - block out - no putbacks.
7. Get easy baskets.
 - Run - Must run but don't have to shoot.
 - Offensive rebounding - only possible flaw in Princeton system. c. Get fouled - neutralize athleticism (make more free throws than opponents attempt).
 - Take the ball at their best player or any player prone to foul.
8. Make free throws.
 - Big part of our skill development workouts.
 - Free throw swish...swish = +1, rim make = 0, miss = -1...play to +2 or -2

9. Make lay ups.

- Emphasis: perfect lay-ups in practice - no rim touches, net only. Pressure lay-ups in practice with a defender.
- You can also use reduced rims.
- In all drills, if not using reduced rims stress the clean lay-up.

10. Give your team a reason to win.

- "Deserving victory" - Pitino.
- Those who work hardest are the last to surrender.
- Fight the feeling of championship games against team that are inferior to a team you have already defeated.
- In a championship tournament you will likely have a bad night. You must play hard enough to win when the ball doesn't bounce right.