



# BASKETBALL COACHING NUGGETS

## VOLUME 7

### Important

Any exercise information presented on these pages is intended as an educational resource and is not intended as a substitute for proper medical advice. Consult your physician or health care professional before performing any of the exercises described on these pages or any exercise technique or regimen, particularly if you have chronic or recurring medical conditions. Discontinue any exercise that causes you pain or severe discomfort and consult a medical expert. Neither the author nor advertisers of this document make any warranty of any kind in regard to the content of the information presented and accept no responsibility for its misuse.

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### Compiled By

Alan Stein

Blair O'Donovan

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## Introduction

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[Alan@StrongerTeam.com](mailto:Alan@StrongerTeam.com)

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

**Alan Stein**

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## 7 Ways to Spread Your Passion

If there is one trait that stands out in those considered the best of the coaching and teaching profession, it is passion. Watching a teacher or coach who truly loves what they are doing is both inspiring and educational. A great teacher brings out the best in those around them because their passion is contagious and creates an environment in which learning and working becomes fun for everyone.

As coaches, we must always remember that teaching is the most important part of our job, and that our passion for what we do is our greatest tool. It helps us in building relationships with players and other coaches which both enhances the impact we can have, as well as makes our job more fulfilling.

**Here are 7 ways you can spread your PASSION for the game and this profession:**

1. **Pick a ‘thinking team.’** Start by picking a group of colleagues who you respect and assemble a team of people to run ideas by. This group can consist of your former teachers, coaches, and mentors, opposing coaches who you have built a relationship with, or coaches who are known for their expertise in a certain area. Try to find a diverse collection of coaches with different philosophies and coaching styles. You will find that the conversations you have with members of your “Thinking Team” will be some of the most enjoyable and rewarding you will ever know.
2. **Ask questions.** Many coaches, particularly young coaches, make the mistake of not asking questions. They feel that it shows a sign of weakness and let their pride get in the way of development. No matter what your coaching background is, you can ALWAYS learn more about the game.
3. **Share information.** Find ways to share what you learn. If you go to a clinic, take great notes and make copies for your staff and the staff of the opposite gender at your school. Sign up for newsletters and spend a little time each day researching different areas of coaching. When you feel like you have enough material, make it available to others. The internet is an incredible coaching tool. Create a web page or develop an e-mail list or newsletter and send information to those who are interested. The more information you share, the more information will come back to you. Do not be concerned that you will be giving away secrets that will cost you games. This is a common mistake among coaches. News flash...most opposing coaches will know exactly what your team’s offense and defense is before you play them.
4. **Speak passionately about the game.** Take every opportunity to speak about the game. Write an article, start a clinic, speak at clinics, have staff meetings designed to throw out ideas and debate what you are doing in your program. Talk to your players about the subtleties of the game. Let anyone who will listen know that you have a committed passion for the profession.
5. **Investigate different ways to do things.** Never rest on what you run, no matter how much success you have with it. There are always little tweaks in the game that can make your program better. Tweaks in X’s and O’s, changes in how you teach the game, and finding different drills to keep things from getting stale are just some of the areas you can improve. Go watch other teams practice. You may find that they run the same things you run, but you might pick up a different way of saying something that could improve the way you teach your players. Attend clinics. If you come away with just ONE THING from a clinic that can help your program, it is worth the price of admission. Record televised games and dissect them. Today’s technology puts you in the film room with some of the best coaching minds in the

country. Study how different coaches handle different game situations. Scout the top teams and determine their game plans.

6. **Organize your coaching material.** Organization is the key to sharing information. Develop a system to keep track of the mass of information you accumulate. Organize by coaches, phases of the game, skill or come up with a system that makes sense to you. I believe there is no better tool for organizing play and drill diagrams than [FastDraw](http://FastModelSports.com) (<http://FastModelSports.com>). Invest in a scanner or a good filing system and you won't be sorry. Keeping material organized and handy will save you time when a colleague asks you for something.
7. **Network with other coaches who share your passion.** Being around others who share your passion will keep you sharp and stimulate your desire to learn. Coaches and teachers go through things that people in other professions don't understand. Join a coaching association and attend events where coaches will be sharing ideas. Keep in touch with the coaches you meet and connect with. The relationships you build through networking will last you a lifetime.

## Jeff Capel's Thoughts On Assistant Coaches

Provided By: Phil Beckner, Weber State Assistant Coach [phillipbeckner@weber.edu](mailto:phillipbeckner@weber.edu)

Great first quote - "You are more honest evaluating yourself after getting fired."

Coach Capel said he looked for 3 things in Assistant Coaches when he became a head coach (loyalty, hard workers, and basketball smarts) but these things eventually changed into the 6 things below...

1. **Communicate**-need to know how to communicate with different people (players, parents, advisors, etc.)
2. **Energy**-head coaches do not want an assistant who is negative or moody every day. Bring positive energy to staff meetings.
3. **Evaluator**-being able to evaluate talent is imperative! Know your head coach (what he likes/who can play for him)
4. **Innovative/Intelligent**-ideas for recruiting, practice, have a way to figure things out
5. **Relentless**-assistants that are not afraid to be told no, assistants that are relentless recruiters
6. **Tireless**-you have to be a worker, have to try to improve yourself

### 3 keys for Assistant Coaches:

#### 1. Know your head coach and believe in him!

- Know how he handles things
- The types of players that can/can't play for him
- His personality

#### 2. You cannot have an ego problem

- Practice effective communication
- Use "We" vs. "I"
- Whenever you leave the meeting, even if difference in opinion-be connected

#### 3. Protect your head coach

- Don't blindside w/bad issues
- Be loyal

### Other thoughts:

"If you want opportunities---Win where you are!"

"Assistants most important job is to make the head coach look good."

"If your boss trusts you, don't be afraid to speak up in meetings."

Capel to players when first taking the VCU job - "You're not allowed to be average in anything you do-we demand excellence."

## Thoughts About Positive Criticism

**By: Mike Dunlap, Assistant Coach at St. John's University**

*A special thanks Shane Dreiling ([www.TeamArete.com](http://www.TeamArete.com)) for sharing the following thoughts from Coach Dunlap.*

- From day one the teacher-coach should explain the power that positive criticism will establish within a team. In brief, we must drink from the cup of criticism if we are going to improve.
- Criticism is much like weightlifting as there is a process that will make the team and the individual change.
- The criticism strategy is simple—Praise, Prompt, and Leave. For example, “I like the way you locked out your elbow on the shot. Please use more legs and then we will have something special.”
- We must use the word “criticism” in a literal sense. We do not want to be clever by using “feedback” sessions—call it what it is.
- There will be an adjustment period with any positive criticism technique. The instructor must show emotional maturity. For instance, you may get “the face” when you first correct the pupil. Keep a level head and get to your point quickly and move on...for example, “I like when you sprint from spot to spot. You can do this for longer than you think and when that loose ball comes up late in the game you’ll be ready.” If you see “the face” during this criticism, ignore it until you see a pattern.
- Criticism will ultimately involve consequences for actions—good and bad. In other words, use actions, not words. If you get “the face” in a repetitive manner then move quickly with your discipline. For example, I remove the player from the court to the locker room. Hence, he is not a distraction to the group and I am letting the team know that my energy will be spent on those that are doing what I want. I will do this early in the season as the bitter pill of discipline and should be taken early in the process. This player has done you a favor.
- Different students have varying degrees of handling criticism—positive or negative. They simply nod to everything you say. I move quickly on this situation as the player is deflecting what you are saying. For instance, the coach says, “Please stop reaching on the ball,” yet the player keeps doing this while always nodding at your corrections. “O.K., we are going to play a defensive game and everyone must hold their hands behind their back while on defense.”
- If done poorly, criticism can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Your observations and words must push towards the positive.
  - Wrong: “You are a dog and if you keep doing that you’ll never get better.”
  - Right: “Yesterday you moved around here like a champion getting 6 loose balls. Today, you are off two beats and just need to get 2 boards in a row to start the engine—now do it!” (Praise, Prompt, and Leave)
    - You have not only told the player something positive but also have given him a specific target.
- The consequences for actions should be used in a positive manner. Specifically, reward the behavior that you want and like. The example would be, “Rick, you really please me by jumping through the pass and that will get us at least one win this year in crunch time.” We let the group know what wins and also how to gain the praise of the instructor.
- Criticism must be realistic when you lay out your positive predictions. Such as, “I see you getting two more boards a game with those V back cuts on the weak side of the boards—good!” If I use the number 10 instead of 2 I have overdone it and will lose credibility over time. The instructor must take a balanced approach. Hence, a statement of expectation can be good or bad.

- Positive Criticism should use the language of the audience. We use metaphors that are relevant to the times as word pictures create a visual imprint. For instance, “Lee, you must think of yourself as a yo-yo. You are trying to stop and go with the dribble, changing speeds and creating space.” Another way of using language is, “When we start out the season everyone must board the plane, get seated, follow instructions, as there is no getting off. We will pick up speed as we go along.”
- Use prediction with your positive criticism (e.g. “When you make the front pivot with your eyes to rim no one can defend you—period—no one!”)
- Do NOT use conjunctions when you praise:
  - Wrong: “I really think you are doing a superb job with your voice but you could really speak up.”
  - Right: “I really think you are doing a superb job with your voice. Now try to speak louder because we are going to play in a packed house next week.”
- If the coach personalizes the criticism or uses sarcasm, you will be rejected by the player and ultimately by the team. You should criticize the act as much as possible.
  - Wrong: “You didn’t get that board in crunch time and we lost the game at that moment. Maybe if you drank a little less beer we would have won.”
  - Right: “I know you will get that board next game because you are using the V back technique on the weak side. What do you think?” Thus, your player has specific targets and this takes away from the subjective evaluation of the instructor. Our players talk about the deflection chart as the criticisms become most powerful when the players accept them as an objective form of evaluation.
- Positive criticism is ongoing. We develop a critical eye with experience. We must be careful as time can create a negative view.
  - a) How? Just like quality wine, we begin to understand bad wines. Does this mean we do not continue to try other wines? No! We simply understand the depth of our experience and use caution as we grow more aware.
  - b) The evolution comes from using fewer words to instruct. While our database grows with time, the economy of words becomes our reward.
- Use the Socratic method to engage the minds. For example, “I’m going to ask the team a question and I want to see if you have the answer.” This is effective because the entire audience is thinking as opposed to one person. They are probably thinking please don’t ask me but nonetheless the team is on their toes.
- A quality critic bases his criticism on a certain criteria. This helps you be more specific and objective. Your reference points for judgment are important. For example, “Our effort is measured by our deflection chart which calculates your positive impact on the outcome. Specifically, you get 1 point for getting a loose ball, taking a charge, or getting a deflection.”
- When criticizing, know the person you are addressing as we say, “Understand but do not accept negative behavior.” See through the eyes of the student when evaluating their background and role models.
- When you are forced to criticize someone for a personal matter, link it to a bigger outcome. “Frank, I am hesitant to tell you this because I don’t want to embarrass you. This bad habit will hold you back as a team leader, with women, and the business community. You need to shower every day. Your odor affects others in a negative way. We can change this habit now. What do you think?”
- Criticism in groups is more dangerous than criticizing the individual alone. However, there may be a time and place to do both. Know your audience, the situation, and the person.
- Criticism must be linked to individual accountability.
  - The teacher must admit his mistakes when they happen, as it is a show of humanness and accountability.
  - We cannot accept excuses in our team culture.
  - The instructor must tackle the excuse maker quickly as this can only go one way—BAD.
    - The teacher must be ready for criticism when it comes your way—it WILL!

- a) Please do not take the approach that the customer is always right—as there are times when they are not. Hence, we still want to get resolution and move on and besides we want to show emotional intelligence and maturity.
- b) The technique goes something like this when confronted by a player, “I think you are a jerk, because you keep coming at me in practice and it isn’t fair!”
  - Coach: “O.K. let’s assume you are right. I’m not sure that the jerk part will help us go anywhere. Why don’t we just stick to the part about me coming at you because ultimately you want to play here and so do I. Why don’t you be specific about what is bother you. We will then put together a strategy that works. Again, please respect my position and you will address me with manners.”
- Criticism is a fact of life. We must have a system in place so that we can be effective and grow as a team. Certainly there will be some “hot” moments. Yet, we can be proactive with our communications. When pressure is applied, chaos will thrive unless we build in a flexible system for communication and criticism.



## What Is A Coach?

A coach is a politician, a judge, a public speaker, a teacher, a trainer, a financier, a laborer, a psychiatrist, a psychologist and a chaplain. It also helps if he is an astrologer or at least understands numerology.

He must be an optimist and yet at times appear a pessimist, seem humble and yet be very proud, strong but at times weak, confident yet not over-confident, enthusiastic but not too enthusiastic.

He must have the hide of an elephant, the fierceness of a lion, the pep of a young pup, the guts of an ox, the stamina of an antelope, the wisdom of an owl, the cunning of a fox, and the heart of a kitten. It will also be to his benefit to develop the acting ability of a poker player with a pat hand.

He must be willing to give freely of his time, his money, his energy, his youth, his family life, his health and sometimes even life itself. In return, he must expect little financial reward, little comfort on earth, little privacy, little praise but plenty of criticism.

However, a good coach is respected in his community, is a leader in his school, is loved by his team, and makes lasting friends wherever he goes.

He has the satisfaction of seeing youth develop and improve in ability. He learns the thrill of victory and how to accept defeat with grace. His associations with athletes help keep him young in mind and spirit; and he, too, must grow and improve with his team.

In his heart he knows that, in spite of the inconveniences, the criticisms, and the demands on his time, he loves his profession, for he is...

...THE COACH.



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## VOLUME 8

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## 23 Characteristics of Great Players

By: Coach Lyndsey Fennelly | [lyndshoops@gmail.com](mailto:lyndshoops@gmail.com) | @LyndsHoops

Lyndsey Fennelly directed an 8-week fall skills program for the All Iowa Attack AAU program last year and each day had a one objective focus for 5 hour training sessions with boys and girls from 2nd grade to high school. She shares this document as a resource for coaches looking to use similar phrases, concepts, and ideas. Her experience with PGC Basketball ([www.pgcbasketball.com](http://www.pgcbasketball.com)) was an invaluable training ground which has helped shape her coach education.

1: Getting Better – the #1 emphasis and purpose behind training. Each athlete's goal every time you walk into a gym should be to pick up 1-2 new golden nuggets of improvement. Commit to this improvement by starting a basketball journal and writing the concepts you learn each day down on paper for maximum information retention. The way to create big separation in your game is by picking up as many 'little things' as you can.

2: Energy - there are 2 things people do when they walk into any room: they either take away energy with frowns, negative body language, and constant complaints or they give energy with genuine smiles, positive body language, and encouraging comments. An energetic gym is more fun to be so, as is living an energetic life. Create the energy in your own gyms, classrooms, and other environments.

3: Focus – most people attribute the success of athletes to the physical game. This is key and important, but you cannot under-estimate the power of a strong and focused mind. Great players focus on what is taking place in every drill, every practice, every game, and every day. The mind is constantly asking oneself : What can I do in this moment to get better?

4: Hustle – great players have an uncommon hustle. You should know that your career window is limited, so make it a habit to maximize every second every time you are in the gym. Set the standard of hustle in your practices, not in games. Great players don't have an 'on-off switch'; they simply have it always turned 'on'!

5: Attitude – one of the few things in life we can control. You have only one September 19, 2010 your entire life. Why not have a great attitude every single day? What's special is having a terrific attitude every day under every circumstance. Show off your great attitude during the toughest of times – that's impressive.

6: Commitment – the act of being pledged, loyal, and true to your dreams and visions. Create a goal for this season. Write it down somewhere that you can look at it daily. Remind yourself of the commitment you'll need to make both on and off the court this year to have a successful season.

7: Passion – do what you love and love what you do. You cannot fake passion. If you truly love the game of basketball, you should have a passion for your improvement and development. You should have passion every time you step into the gym with a willingness to learn and mentality of, 'what can I do to get better?'

8: Teamwork – in a team sport like basketball, the we is always more important than the me. The better the team, the more noticed the player. Do all you can to foster great teamwork, knowing that will get you the attention most players desire? A program with great teamwork, constantly putting others before themselves, is easily envied by the weak.

9: Body Language – 93% of what we say is non-verbal. You are constantly communicating even if your mouth isn't moving. Communicate all the time that you're paying attention, you're engaged, you're tough, and you're eager to learn more. Great body language will make your coaches coach you more, will make your teachers teach you more, and will make an employer want to hire you one day.

10: Hard Work – “If everyone worked as hard as I did, I would be out of a job” is a quote by Steve Nash that is a great reminder that there is truly no substitute for hard work. Hard work is unquestionably one of the best skills you can master to master a successful life both on and off the court. Allow no one to out work you.

11: Control – control of body, control of eyes, control of thoughts, control of emotions, control of the game, control of the tempo, and most importantly, control the uncontrollable. Rather than blame, make excuses, or point fingers, focus on the things you can control : your effort, your attitude, your mind.

12: Practice Makes Pe...Permanent – practice does not make perfect, it instead makes permanent. Great players don't go half speed at any time, knowing that the opportunity to become permanently great was just missed. Practice habits that will make your game permanently improve and allow you to compete at the highest level.

13: Sportsmanship – the best players have a respect for the game, its rules, officials, and participants, including coaches, players, and fans. Be gracious in defeat and humble in wins without compromising the unrelenting desire to succeed, improve, and most importantly win.

14: Character – you speak louder in action than you do with words with the decisions you make. Live this simple rule : “do the right thing”. If you don't whether you know it's right or wrong, it's most likely the wrong decision. Treat others as you want to be treated, including your teammates. Be 'bigger' than negative people and show off your true self all the time, not just when things are going well.

15: Pride – a true champion has the pride of a lion: self-respect and personal worth. You have satisfaction with your achievements, and you allow your pride to fuel your burning passion to always improve. Those with pride have a feeling of 'dislike' when they know they've fallen below their own standards.

16: Loyalty – you are honest with your family, your coaches, your teammates, your friends, your teachers, but most importantly, yourself. You are loyal in words and actions with those you surround yourself with. Be loyal to these people in life by never violating their trust, turning your back on them, or speaking about them instead of to them.

17: Appreciation – life is TOO short to not appreciate each and every day you are given on this Earth. Two powerful words that we don't use enough : “thank you” can be said more often than most do. Be verbally appreciative with sincere words and physically appreciative by never wasting an opportunity on court to improve.

18: Respect – most importantly, respect yourself because it's impossible to respect others if you can't respect the most important person in your life, you. Treat others as you want to be treated : coaches, parents, teachers, friends, family, teammates, officials, and opponents. Respect the facilities you play in and the environments you are surrounded by.

19: Accountability – you are the driver of your own life and of your own career. Do not fall prey to allow others to dictate your future. Take accountability and responsibility for your actions, your dedication, your work ethic, and ultimately, your decisions. Hold yourself to a higher standard of excellence than anyone else.

20: Finish – the great Michael Jordan once said, “It's not how hard you push along the way, it's having something in you to finish”. The great players and people in life finish what they have started. Make it a habit to complete everything you do with the same energy and effort you start with.

21: Intensity – an effort defined by expression of great zeal, energy, determination, and concentration. You ‘attack’ drills with speed, power, and a rage for improvement. Your end of game intensity is paralleled by your in practice intensity. You show off your intensity not only in effort, but in your consistent body language.

22: Poise – having a calmness under every situation and always being yourself. Pressure situations don’t faze you, but instead bring out your greatness. You are always communicating an “I got this” with your teammates and coaches. People turn to you knowing you have an un-faze-ability.

23: Excellence – “the habit of excellence can become enjoyable addictive” (Dick DeVenzio, author of *Stuff Good Players Should Know*). We have trained all Fall Skills in creating habits of excellence on the court. Make excellence your habit in everything you do. Be an excellent student. Be an excellent friend. Be an excellent daughter, son, sister, brother. Be an excellent athlete. Be an excellent human being.

### General Teaching Ideas and Concepts:

- We are all creatures of habit. Players under pressure always revert to their most dominant habits. The goal of your off-season is to build positive habits of play to create more in-season success.
- The lower to the ground you are, the more explosive you are going to be.
- Great offensive players seek, initiate, and maintain contact.
- A good shot fake is everything but the shot.
- Basketball is a game of explosive changing of speeds, not continual same speed movement up and down the court. Make your dribble moves more effective by stopping as often as possible. If you want to become quicker, stop more.
- Vision is not staring straight ahead, but instead always knowing what’s to the right – left – and who’s coming behind while never losing sight of what’s ahead.
- The best players are able to coach themselves through workouts by talking themselves through the points of emphasis and seeing opposing players as they compete at drills ‘on air’.
- Talking to yourself will create instant focus and increase the intensity of your workouts especially when in a gym by yourself.
- The most important offensive skill is the ability to handle the basketball. You can never become a ‘good enough’ ball handler. Formula for improvement = 20 minutes per day with 2 basketballs
- Successful players transfer game thoughts into their workouts. The mental aspect of the game is not practiced enough by young players.
- The more coach-able you are, the more coaching you’ll get. Show off with your body language that you want to be coached.
- The easiest body part to fake with is your eyes. Be deceptive with your eye movements.

## Skill Work and Things to Think About

By Brad Stevens, Head Basketball Coach at Butler University

Notes Compiled By: Josh Nugent, Assistant Basketball Coach at St. Edward High School

"Get your eyes to tell a story."

### • Coaching Skill Work

- Players need to be "Efficient Workers" (on court workouts = 40-45 min. max).
- Coaches' job to show and use workouts/drills that players can then do on their own or with a small group of players (only get x amount of time to work with players so you have to equip them with things to do on their own).

### • Teaching Points and Drills

- "More Ball Quick" - speed with the ball
  - Quick Pick-ups: Sideline
    - x-over, pick-up (quick and tight) down sideline
  - X Ball Handling: Baseline (ft line, 1/2 court, ft line)
    - Explode to ft line (speed dribble), 2 back dribbles, then x-over move and explode out to next spot.
    - After making last move at far ft line, 1 dribble and finish at rim
  - Star Ball Handling: 3 pt. line (4 spots - corner, wing, top, wing)
    - Start in corner, rip through middle, explode to key (i.e. start in right corner and rip through middle, dribble with left)
    - Decelerate then slide out to next spot (wing) while dribbling
    - Decelerate, plant outside foot on wing (3 pt line extended) and explode back to key.
    - At last spot (far wing), explode out and finish at rim ( 1 or 2 dribbles max).
- Ball Screen Reads
- Penetrate and Kick Reads
- End of Workout: "**Nuggets Drill**"
  - 3 Point Shooting Drill - 5 Spots, Make 3-in-a-row
    - Start on wing, drift (slide) to corner - corner 3's
    - Transition 3's at wing - 1/2 court, sprint into 3's at wing
    - Use ball screen at top of key
    - Flares at wing
    - Cross screens - block to corner
  - Goal: 30 Total Attempts to make 3-in-a-row from the 5 spots
  - Can mix up the actions at each spot
- Best Drill to Get Shots During Practice
  - 3 Man Shooting (Shooter, Passer, Rebounder)
- Team Drill: "**7, 7 and 7**" (2 Teams - Competition)
  - 3 Lines (Corner, Slot, Wing)
  - Pass from Corner to Slot and then from Slot to Wing (follow your pass)
  - When ball gets to Wing:
    1. Rip through finish at rim (make 7 as a team)
    2. 1 Dribble Pull-ups (make 7 as a team)
    3. Spot up 3's (make 7 as a team)
  - Shooter gets their own rebound and passes back to Corner
  - 1st team to make 7, 7 and 7 WINS

- End of Practice Shooting/Conditioning Drill (Team vs. Clock): "**Butler Shooting**"
  - 80 makes in 3 minutes
  - Line at each elbow at 1 hoop, 1 side of the court (2 balls at the front of each line)
    - Shoot
    - Get your own rebound
    - Pass to the opposite line
    - Sprint to far baseline
    - Sprint back to the line you passed to after your shot
  - Some notes/observations Coach Stevens made about his teams using this drill.
    - Usually on pace to get 80 after 1st minute
    - 2nd minute team drops off
    - 3rd minute (sense of desperation, more focus) team almost reaches goal
    - Hard to keep focus for the entire drill
    - "Middle moments of the Game" are just as important as the beginning and end of the game. 13 minute mark of 2nd half just as important as 3 min left in game.
    - \*After failing to make 80 in 3 minutes, sometimes we'll line up again and the goal will be to make 30 in 1 minute. **They almost always get 30 in 1 minute**
    - So the question becomes: "**Why don't we do it all the time?**"
    - **Drills that serve multiple purposes are the best drills to use in practice**
      - This drill is a great conditioner
      - Players get a lot of shots up in 3 minutes
      - Teaches broader concepts about what it takes to succeed - "the middle moments of the game"
- Things to Think About and Other Teaching Points
  - Values (Vision and Mission Statement)
  - Team First, Ready to Improve on a Daily Basis
  - 4 Things We Must Do to Win (Urban Meyer - Florida Practice) adapted by Butler
    - Be tough with the basketball
    - Dominate Defensively - "If we don't have a defensive DNA, there is a limit to what we can achieve."
    - Take Great Shots
    - Dominate Effort Plays
  - Early in the season, at least 100 GAME shots before/during practice
  - "In the midst of struggles; 'What are you good at? What do you do best?'"
  - Typical Butler Practice
    - 15 minutes - Skill work
    - 30-35 minutes - Defensive DNA and Transition Defense
    - 5 minutes - Water/Free Throws
    - 15 minutes - Skill work
    - 15-20 minutes - Offensive Review
    - Total: 90 minutes
  - Some important statistics that Butler uses
    - Offensive Rebounding %
    - 3 pt. attempt per field goal attempt
    - FT attempts per field goal attempt
    - FT rate
    - T/O % (off/def)
      - Coach Stevens uses numbers to make comparisons and get points across
      - EX: At 1 point last year teams were shooting 48% against Butler. 3 more stops would lower that to 40%. **Just 3 more stops per game.**



- Shooting
  - Are you prepared?
  - How good do you feel about yourself?
- Free Throws - **Limit Your Motion**
- **No Charge Drills and Very Little Rebounding Drills**
  - Teaches rebounding and taking charger primarily through film (**Positioning**)

## Herm Edwards' Speech to NFL Rookies

Submitted By: Phil Beckner, Weber State Assistant Coach | [phillipbeckner@weber.edu](mailto:phillipbeckner@weber.edu)

### 1<sup>st</sup> QTR

- **It's not a right but a privilege to play and coach in the NFL.**
- **Talent, Expectation, and Production – these can sometimes be a curse.**
  - Does the production meet the talent?
  - Don't waste your talent!
- **Expectations – a goal without a plan is a wish!**
- **Priorities – your habits create who you are.**
  - If you're not willing to change your habits, you're not going to change!
  - What are *your* priorities? Herm Edwards: Faith, Family, Occupation
  - 12 o'clock rule: Nothing good happens after midnight!

### 2<sup>nd</sup> QTR

- **Professional football player – it's not a hobby, it's your occupation.**
  - You have to take a grown man's job.
- **Be coachable and available – know your role and do your job.**
  - Don't get sensitive, be coachable
  - "Hurt got to play, hurt got to practice." Everyone hurts, but you don't get better on the sideline!
- **Be a good listener – processing information is critical to having a successful career.**
- **Coaches teach you 3 things – What, How, and Why.**

### 3<sup>rd</sup> QTR

- **Commitment** – it usually starts with a struggle. *"Everyone wants to go to heaven but nobody wants to die."*
- **Distractions** – wealth & fame attracts many friends (you choose your friends, don't let them choose you).
- **Enthusiasm** – compete in everything you do, every day!
  - Brett Favre, the all-time best example, never lost enthusiasm.
- **Be Accountable** – to coaches and teammates
  - You must earn the trust of coaches and veteran players

### 4<sup>th</sup> QTR

- **Legacy** – once you receive the pro helmet and jersey your legacy begins.

**A true professional....**

- **Is always early** – studies the game plan and opponents' film/notebook to prepare for work.
- **Is all about the team** – always puts the team ahead of personal glory.
- **Is physically prepared** – never tires in practice or game. Ever.
- **Competes** – thrives on challenges; the tougher the better (especially in 1-on-1 contests)
- **Is a leader** – by example, he epitomizes the way the game should be played.

## "Toughness"

By: Jay Bilas | ESPN.com | @JayBilas

Jay Bilas is one of the most knowledgeable, and funny, experts on Twitter – a must follow – [www.Twitter.com/JayBilas](http://www.Twitter.com/JayBilas)

I have heard the word "toughness" thrown around a lot lately. Reporters on television, radio and in print have opined about a team or player's "toughness" or quoted a coach talking about his team having to be "tougher" to win.

Then, in almost coordinated fashion, I would watch games and see player upon player thumping his chest after a routine play, angrily taunting an opponent after a blocked shot, getting into a shouting match with an opposing player, or squaring up nose-to-nose as if a fight might ensue. I see players jawing at each other, trying to "intimidate" other players. What a waste of time. That is nothing more than fake toughness, and it has no real value.

I often wonder: Do people really understand what coaches and experienced players mean when they emphasize "toughness" in basketball? Or is it just some buzzword that is thrown around haphazardly without clear definition or understanding? I thought it was the latter, and I wrote a short blog item about it a couple of weeks ago.

The response I received was overwhelming. Dozens of college basketball coaches called to tell me that they had put the article up in the locker room, put it in each player's locker, or had gone over it in detail with their teams.

Memphis coach John Calipari called to say that he had his players post the definition of toughness over their beds because he believed that true "toughness" was the one thing that his team needed to develop to reach its potential. I received messages from high school coaches who wanted to relay the definition of toughness to their players and wanted to talk about it further.

Well, I got the message that I should expound upon what I consider toughness to be. It may not be what you think.

Toughness is something I had to learn the hard way, and something I had no real idea of until I played college basketball. When I played my first game in college, I thought that toughness was physical and based on how much punishment I could dish out and how much I could take. I thought I was tough.

I found out pretty quickly that I wasn't, but I toughened up over time, and I got a pretty good understanding of toughness through playing in the ACC, for USA Basketball, in NBA training camps, and as a professional basketball player in Europe. I left my playing career a heck of a lot tougher than I started it, and my only regret is that I didn't truly "get it" much earlier in my playing career.

When I faced a tough opponent, I wasn't worried that I would get hit -- I was concerned that I would get sealed on ball reversal by a tough post man, or that I would get boxed out on every play, or that my assignment would sprint the floor on every possession and get something easy on me. The toughest guys I had to guard were the ones who made it tough on me.

Toughness has nothing to do with size, physical strength or athleticism. Some players may be born tough, but I believe that toughness is a skill, and it is a skill that can be developed and improved. Michigan State coach Tom Izzo always says, "Players play, but tough players win." He is right. Here are some of the ways true toughness is exhibited in basketball:

**Set a good screen:** The toughest players to guard are the players who set good screens. When you set a good screen, you are improving the chances for a teammate to get open, and you are greatly improving your chances of getting open. A good screen can force the defense to make a mistake. A lazy or bad screen is a waste of everyone's time and energy. To be a tough player, you need to be a "screener/scorer," a player who screens hard and immediately looks for an opportunity on offense. On the 1984 U.S. Olympic Team, Bob Knight made Michael Jordan set a screen before he could get a shot. If it is good enough for Jordan, arguably the toughest player ever, it is good enough for you.

**Set up your cut:** The toughest players make hard cuts, and set up their cuts. Basketball is about deception. Take your defender one way, and then plant the foot opposite of the direction you want to go and cut hard. A hard cut may get you a basket, but it may also get a teammate a basket. If you do not make a hard cut, you will not get anyone open. Setting up your cut, making the proper read of the defense, and making a hard cut require alertness, good conditioning and good concentration. Davidson's Stephen Curry is hardly a physical muscle-man, but he is a tough player because he is in constant motion, he changes speeds, he sets up his cuts, and he cuts hard. Curry is hard to guard, and he is a tough player.

**Talk on defense:** The toughest players talk on defense, and communicate with their teammates. It is almost impossible to talk on defense and not be in a stance, down and ready, with a vision of man and ball. If you talk, you let your teammates know you are there, and make them and yourself better defenders. It also lets your opponent know that you are fully engaged.

**Jump to the ball:** When on defense, the tough defenders move as the ball moves. The toughest players move on the flight of the ball, not when it gets to its destination. And the toughest players jump to the ball and take away the ball side of the cut. Tough players don't let cutters cut across their face -- they make the cutter change his path.

**Don't get screened:** No coach can give a player the proper footwork to get through every screen. Tough players have a sense of urgency not to get screened and to get through screens so that the cutter cannot catch the ball where he wants to. A tough player makes the catch difficult.

**Get your hands up:** A pass discouraged is just as good as a pass denied. Tough players play with their hands up to take away vision, get deflections and to discourage a pass in order to allow a teammate to cover up. Cutters and post players will get open, if only for a count. If your hands are up, you can keep the passer from seeing a momentary opening.

**Play the ball, see your man:** Most defenders see the ball and hug their man, because they are afraid to get beat. A tough defender plays the ball and sees his man. There is a difference.

**Get on the floor:** In my first road game as a freshman, there was a loose ball that I thought I could pick up and take the other way for an easy one. While I was bending over at the waist, one of my opponents dived on the floor and got possession of the ball. My coach was livid. We lost possession of the ball because I wasn't tough enough to get on the floor for it. I tried like hell never to get out-toughed like that again.

**The first player to get to the floor is usually the one to come up with any loose ball.**  
**Close out under control:** It is too easy to fly at a shooter and think you are a tough defender. A tough defender closes out under control,

takes away a straight line drive and takes away the shot. A tough player has a sense of urgency but has the discipline to do it the right way.

**Post your man, not a spot:** Most post players just blindly run to the low block and get into a shoving match for a spot on the floor. The toughest post players are posting their defensive man. A tough post player is always open, and working to get the ball to the proper angle to get a post feed. Tough post players seal on ball reversal and call for the ball, and they continue to post strong even if their teammates miss them.

**Run the floor:** Tough players sprint the floor, which drags the defense and opens up things for others. Tough players run hard and get "easy" baskets, even though there is nothing easy about them. Easy baskets are hard to get. Tough players don't take tough shots -- they work hard to make them easy.

**Play so hard, your coach has to take you out:** I was a really hard worker in high school and college. But I worked and trained exceptionally hard to make playing easier. I was wrong. I once read that Bob Knight had criticized a player of his by saying, "You just want to be comfortable out there!" Well, that was me, and when I read that, it clicked with me. I needed to work to increase my capacity for work, not to make it easier to play. I needed to work in order to be more productive in my time on the floor. Tough players play so hard that their coaches have to take them out to get rest so they can put them back in. The toughest players don't pace themselves.

**Get to your teammate first:** When your teammate lays his body on the line to dive on the floor or take a charge, the tough players get to him first to help him back up. If your teammate misses a free throw, tough players get to him right away. Tough players are also great teammates.

**Take responsibility for your teammates:** Tough players expect a lot from their teammates, but they also put them first. When the bus leaves at 9 a.m., tough players not only get themselves there, but they also make sure their teammates are up and get there, too. Tough players take responsibility for others in addition to themselves. They make sure their teammates eat first, and they give credit to their teammates before taking it themselves.

**Take a charge:** Tough players are in a stance, playing the ball, and alert in coming over from the weak side and taking a charge. Tough players understand the difference between being in the right spot and being in the right spot with the intention of stopping somebody. Some players will look puzzled and say, "But I was in the right spot." Tough players know that they have to get to the right spot with the sense of urgency to stop someone.

**The toughest players never shy away from taking a charge.** **Get in a stance:** Tough players don't play straight up and down and put themselves in the position of having to get ready to get ready. Tough players are down in a stance on both ends of the floor, with feet staggered and ready to move. Tough players are the aggressor, and the aggressor is in a stance.

**Finish plays:** Tough players don't just get fouled, they get fouled and complete the play. They don't give up on a play or assume that a teammate will do it. A tough player plays through to the end of the play and works to finish every play.

**Work on your pass:** A tough player doesn't have his passes deflected. A tough player gets down, pivots, pass-fakes, and works to get the proper angle to pass away from the defense and deliver the ball.

**Throw yourself into your team's defense:** A tough player fills his tank on the defensive end, not on offense. A tough player is not deterred by a missed shot. A tough player values his performance first by how well he defended.

**Take and give criticism the right way:** Tough players can take criticism without feeling the need to answer back or give excuses. They are open to getting better and expect to be challenged and hear tough things. You will never again in your life have the opportunity you have now at the college level: a coaching staff that is totally and completely dedicated to making you and your team better. Tough players listen and are not afraid to say what other teammates may not want to hear, but need to hear.

**Show strength in your body language:** Tough players project confidence and security with their body language. They do not hang their heads, do not react negatively to a mistake of a teammate, and do not whine and complain to officials. Tough players project strength, and do not cause their teammates to worry about them. Tough players do their jobs, and their body language communicates that to their teammates -- and to their opponents.

**Catch and face:** Teams that press and trap are banking on the receiver's falling apart and making a mistake. When pressed, tough players set up their cuts, cut hard to an open area and present themselves as a receiver to the passer. Tough players catch, face the defense, and make the right read and play, and they do it with poise. Tough players do not just catch and dribble; they catch and face.

**Don't get split:** If you trap, a tough player gets shoulder-to-shoulder with his teammate and does not allow the handler to split the trap and gain an advantage on the back side of the trap.

**Be alert:** Tough players are not "cool." Tough players are alert and active, and tough players communicate with teammates so that they are alert, too. Tough players echo commands until everyone is on the same page. They understand the best teams play five as one. Tough players are alert in transition and get back to protect the basket and the 3- point line. Tough players don't just run back to find their man, they run back to stop the ball and protect the basket.

**Concentrate, and encourage your teammates to concentrate:** Concentration is a skill, and tough players work hard to concentrate on every play. Tough players go as hard as they can for as long as they can.

**It's not your shot; it's our shot:** Tough players don't take bad shots, and they certainly don't worry about getting "my" shots. Tough players work for good shots and understand that it is not "my" shot, it is "our" shot. Tough players celebrate when "we" score.

**Box out and go to the glass every time:** Tough players are disciplined enough to lay a body on someone. They make first contact and go after the ball. And tough players do it on every possession, not just when they feel like it. They understand defense is not complete until they secure the ball.

**Take responsibility for your actions:** Tough players make no excuses. They take responsibility for their actions. Take James Johnson for example. With 17 seconds to go in Wake's game against Duke on Wednesday, Jon Scheyer missed a 3-pointer that bounced right to Johnson. But instead of aggressively pursuing the ball with a sense of urgency, Johnson stood there and waited for the ball to come to him. It never did. Scheyer grabbed it, called a timeout and the Blue Devils hit a game-tying shot on a possession they never should've had. Going after the loose ball is toughness -- and Johnson didn't show it on that play. But what happened next? He re-focused, slipped a screen for the winning basket, and after the game -- when he could've been basking only in the glow of victory -- manned up to the mistake that could've cost his team the win. "That was my responsibility -- I should have had that," Johnson said of the goof. No excuses. Shouldering the responsibility. That's toughness.

Look your coaches and teammates in the eye: Tough players never drop their heads. They always look coaches and teammates in the eye, because if they are talking, it is important to them and to you.

Move on to the next play: Tough players don't waste time celebrating a good play or lamenting a bad one. They understand that basketball is too fast a game to waste time and opportunities with celebratory gestures or angry reactions. Tough players move on to the next play. They know that the most important play in any game is the next one.

Be hard to play against, and easy to play with: Tough players make their teammates' jobs easier, and their opponents' jobs tougher.

Make every game important: Tough players don't categorize opponents and games. They know that if they are playing, it is important. Tough players understand that if they want to play in championship games, they must treat every game as a championship game.

Make getting better every day your goal: Tough players come to work every day to get better, and keep their horizons short. They meet victory and defeat the same way: They get up the next day and go to work to be better than they were the day before. Tough players hate losing but are not shaken or deterred by a loss. Tough players enjoy winning but are never satisfied. For tough players, a championship or a trophy is not a goal; it is a destination. The goal is to get better every day.

When I was playing, the players I respected most were not the best or most talented players. The players I respected most were the toughest players. I don't remember anything about the players who talked a good game or blocked a shot and acted like a fool. I remember the players who were tough to play against.

Anybody can talk. Not anybody can be tough.





# BASKETBALL COACHING NUGGETS

## VOLUME 9

### **Important**

Any exercise information presented on these pages is intended as an educational resource and is not intended as a substitute for proper medical advice. Consult your physician or health care professional before performing any of the exercises described on these pages or any exercise technique or regimen, particularly if you have chronic or recurring medical conditions. Discontinue any exercise that causes you pain or severe discomfort and consult a medical expert. Neither the author nor advertisers of this document make any warranty of any kind in regard to the content of the information presented and accept no responsibility for its misuse.

### **Additional Resources**

For additional basketball specific strength & conditioning resources, please visit:

- ➔ Stronger Team | Alan Stein's Blog: <http://Blog.StrongerTeam.com>
- ➔ Training Products, Guides, Workouts, Programs: <http://Shop.StrongerTeam.com>
- ➔ Stronger Team Information, Schedules, Articles, Services: <http://www.StrongerTeam.com>
- ➔ Free Training Videos: <http://www.youtube.com/StrongerTeamDotCom>

### **Compiled By**

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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:

<http://www.strongerteam.com/RegisterNuggets.aspx>

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

[Alan@StrongerTeam.com](mailto:Alan@StrongerTeam.com)

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

**Alan Stein**

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## 20 Truths of Basketball

By: Jimmy Dykes

1. Coaches want 'everyday' players.
  - Play hard every possession.
  - Go to class every day.
  - Do the right thing all of the time.
2. Coaches must look at themselves first after game.
  - What did I not get done to prepare?
3. If you are not tough, you will not win consistently!
  - Get loose balls.
  - Refuse to get screened.
  - Don't let one mistake compound.
4. If you can't talk it – You can't execute it.
5. You must score consistently from 3 areas:
  - Free Throw line
  - Around the basket
  - Open shots
6. Quality of our shots vs. quality of our opponent's shots determines W's and L's.
7. Cut with a purpose. Cut like you are going to get the ball!
8. Must shoot 30% or better from the 3-point line.
  - Shot selection
  - Who is taking the shots?
9. It's not the number of plays you run, it's how well you run them that matters.
  - Execution is everything!
10. Great players embrace contact and get through it. They make plays regardless.
11. Protect against straight line drives to the basket.
  - Guard your yard.
12. Contain the ball in middle third of the floor.

13. Communicate on all ball screens.
14. Any form of selfishness must leave. It can't be tolerated!
  - On court
  - Off court
15. Substitutions
  - Trust their effort
  - Trust their memory
  - Trust their talent
16. Emphasize who you are every practice and every game.
  - Create and maintain an identity!
17. Everything in your program is either taught or it's allowed.
18. Fix problems immediately. Don't let something small turn into something big.
19. Work them as hard as you are willing to love them.
20. Hold everyone in your program accountable for everything they do.
  - Yourself
  - Staff
  - Players

## 5 Rules for Leading Your Teammates

**“It’s not enough to do your best; you must know what to do, and THEN do your best.”**

**– W. Edwards Deming**

Contrary to what you may have heard, great leaders aren't born. They're made. Exceptional team leaders are shaped by following these five rules.

### **Rule 1: Be Prepared**

Team leaders earn the right to lead by being prepared. The prepared leader is always in the process of improving. They stimulate improvement by always asking more of themselves. What am I doing well? Where do I need to improve? How do my behaviors impact my teammates? Leadership grows out of self-knowledge, character, integrity, discipline, competence and commitment to a personal vision of excellence. When these building blocks are in place you have the foundation to model the way for your teammates.

### **Rule 2: Build Right Relationships**

The ability to effectively lead your team will be determined by the quality and character of the relationships you build. Exceptional leaders build genuine relationships with teammates based on authenticity and appreciation. Leadership is always a two-way interaction between leaders and followers—between you and your teammates. Exceptional team leaders ground interactions in respect and genuine care, and understand that right relationships emerge when everyone has a mutual influence and impact on each other.

### **Rule 3: Foster Integrity**

Leaders function at their best when they are consistent in their values, actions, and words. Part of the sport experience is dealing with losses, failures, and disappointments. How you handle and help teammates work through adversity will influence trust and loyalty among team members. Supporting and reassuring teammates in times of doubt will help others learn, grow, and change. Acting with integrity is the glue to building a cohesive team.

### **Rule 4: Exert Influence**

Your success as a leader will be found in getting teammates to go beyond themselves—to give more to the team than they ever believed they were capable of giving. Leadership is fundamentally about change. A common problem is that most people feel little need to move beyond their comfort zone. This requires motivating teammates by persuading and influencing them to change in some basic ways, challenging them get out of their comfort zone. Your actions and attitudes will exert influence through your personal example—providing energy by embodying high standards and demonstrating an unwavering commitment to the team's vision.

### **Rule 5: Know Where You're Going**

The difference between being an average team leader or an exceptional team leader is knowing where you're going. Great team leaders cultivate an attractive and inspiring vision for individual excellence and contribution to the team. This requires understanding the Big Picture and using it as your road map and rudder. To motivate others to follow you need to sell the Big Picture, getting your teammates to believe in the team's purpose, vision and goals.

## Building Team Chemistry

By: Colby Blaine, College of Southern Idaho

**“Players don’t play hard because they like each other; they like each other because they play hard.”**

Too often coaches and players judge their team’s chemistry by how well everyone gets along off the court. It is an unrealistic challenge to get every player to like each other based on personality. When bringing together 12-15 players from different backgrounds, you shouldn’t expect them to all be best friends. However, that doesn’t mean you can’t develop chemistry. To develop chemistry, you must question each individual’s actions on the court. When players know and TRUST that their teammates will make the unselfish play, that’s when they will develop that mutual respect for each other on the court. When each player knows that their teammates are willing to lay their body on the line, when they know that their teammates won’t point fingers if something goes wrong, when they know that their teammates are in it to win it, that’s when they develop CHEMISTRY.

As a coach, you can help develop team chemistry by putting your players in situations to prove their loyalty to the team. Below are 12 unselfish, ‘game winning’ plays. There should be a HUGE emphasis on making these plays in practice. Once players take pride in making these plays and they begin showing up in games, you will see your team chemistry get stronger and stronger.

### 10 Chemistry Building Plays

1. Take charges
2. Dive for loose balls
3. Contesting shots
4. Setting solid screens
5. Delivering a pass to an open teammate
6. Filling the right spots when your teammate penetrates
7. Sitting in a defensive stance and communicating the entire possession
8. Listening to coaches with good eye contact and body language
9. Acknowledging teammates when they make great plays
10. Helping a teammate up when they’re on the floor

## The Power of Positive Coaching

**By: David Bornstein of the New York Times**

Imagine you're coaching a big soccer game, against an undefeated team that has beaten your team in all your previous matches. Your 11-year-olds are playing well and are ahead. Then, in the closing minutes, the official makes a bad call that goes against you and, because of it, you lose. After the game, the parents of your players scream at the official. The kids are disappointed, looking up at you. What do you do?

Or you're coaching tee-ball and one of your 5-year-old players has failed to get a hit so far. Now, he's up again in a crucial situation and is nervous. All eyes are on him. His first swing misses high. The second misses low and knocks the ball off the tee. You call him over to offer some help. What do you say?

Or you're a parent and your 14-year-old daughter has just come off the basketball court. In the final seconds of the game, with her team behind by a point, she was fouled and awarded two free throws. What do you say if she missed both of them and her team lost? What if she triumphed?

Coaches can be enormously influential in the lives of children. If you ask a random group of adults to recall something of significance that happened in their fourth or fifth grade classroom, many will draw a blank. But ask about a sports memory from childhood and you're likely to hear about a game winning hit, or a dropped pass, that, decades later, can still elicit emotion. The meaning that coaches or parents help young people derive from such moments can shape their lives.

But today's youth coaches often struggle to provide sound, evidence-based, and age-appropriate guidance to players. Part of the problem is that of the 2.5 million American adults who serve as volunteer coaches for youth sports, less than 10 percent receive any formal training. Most become coaches because their own child is on the team — and they basically improvise. I did this in soccer and, through my over-eagerness, almost destroyed my then-6-year-old son's delight for the game.

But a bigger problem is that youth sports have come to emulate the win-at-all-costs ethos of professional sports. While youth and professional sports look alike, adults often forget that they are fundamentally different enterprises. Professional sports are an entertainment business. Youth sports are supposed to be about education and human development.

That's why it is so disturbing that, over the past two decades, that researchers have found that poor sportsmanship and acts of aggression have become common in youth sports settings. Cheating has also become more accepted. Coaches give their stars the most play. Parents and fans boo opponents or harangue officials (mimicking professional events). They put pressure on children to perform well, with hopes for scholarships or fulfilling their own childhood dreams. Probably the most serious indictment of the system is that the vast majority of children — some 70 to 80 percent — drop out of sports shortly after middle school. For many, sports become too competitive and selective. In short, they stop being fun.

Ed Buller, an athletic director and football coach at Oak Grove High School in San Jose, Calif., has helped pilot a Positive Coach Alliance program.

What's needed is a culture change. That's the goal of the Positive Coaching Alliance, a modest-size organization that punches well above its weight. P.C.A. has trained 450,000 adults, mostly coaches and youth sports leaders, who reach about 4 million children and youths. The organization is working to spread the

message that youth sports is about giving young athletes a positive, character-building experience — not to become major league athletes, but to become “major league people.”

P.C.A. has conducted in-person and on-line trainings with coaches from 1,700 youth sports organizations including Little League Baseball, the American Youth Soccer Association, U.S. Lacrosse, and the Amateur Athletic Union, which has committed to put all of its 50,000 coaches through P.C.A.’s online trainings. The Dallas Independent School District, which oversees 800 youth sports coaches, has enlisted P.C.A. for trainings. “There’s been such a push from parents about winning at all costs,” explained Jeff Johnson, the district’s athletic director. “Sportsmanship sometimes goes out the window. The positive coaching has helped my coaches think about more than just winning.”

Many advocates dream of reforming youth sports, but P.C.A. is distinctive for its approach. Through its messaging, it reassures coaches that it’s O.K. to win — that, in fact, a “relentlessly positive” coach will usually be more successful on the scoreboard. As such, P.C.A. has been able to penetrate the hard-nosed culture of competitive sports. The organization is supported by top professional coaches like Phil Jackson who led the Los Angeles Lakers and Chicago Bulls to 11 National Basketball League titles, and Doc Rivers of the Boston Celtics. This gives the organization credibility. Finally, P.C.A. has artfully packaged complex psychological research into simple tools that any coach or parent can put into practice. As a father of an 8-year-old who has happily regained his love of soccer, I can attest to the value of its teachings. Research has found that youth attrition rates are 80 percent lower for children whose coaches practice positive coaching.

P.C.A. was founded by Jim Thompson, a teacher who previously directed the Public Management Program at Stanford Business School. Years before, Thompson had taught in a classroom with severely emotionally-disturbed students, where he became skilled at managing and motivating children. When his son turned 6 and started getting into sports, Thompson discovered parents and coaches violating all the rules he’d learned: putting pressure on children to perform, trying to give kids technical advice while they were anxious or frustrated, rewarding misbehavior by giving it extra attention, making children worry about making mistakes. He started coaching, discovered he loved it, and collected his ideas in a book: “Positive Coaching, Building Character and Self Esteem Through Sports.” (He has since authored seven others.) With the support of Stanford’s Athletic Department, he launched P.C.A. in 1998.

The core of P.C.A.’s approach is to train “double goal” coaches: coaches who balance the goal of winning, with the second, and more important, goal of teaching life lessons. Coaches are taught to help children focus on improving their own game, helping their teammates improve their game, and improving the game as a whole. (In life, this translates to improving yourself, being a leader who helps others flourish, and working to make society better.) P.C.A. encourages parents to let go of winning and concentrate on life lessons. “There are only two groups of people whose job is to win games, they are coaches and players” says Thompson. “Parents have a much more important job: to guide their child’s character development.”

Because there are so many opportunities to fail in sports, it is a gold mine of teachable moments.

To deliver these concepts, Thompson built up a network of 100 expert trainers and developed catchy acronyms and simplified conceptual tools. For example, sports psychologists know that athletes who focus on things they can control, as opposed to external factors, are less anxious, more confident, and consequentially, happier and better performers. Thompson wondered how to translate the ideas so they could be picked up by any coach.

He came up with the “ELM Tree of Mastery” to help coaches remember that the feedback that most helps young athletes develop their potential is not praise for good performance or criticism for bad performance.



What works best is helping children understand that they control three key variables: their level of effort, whether they learn from experiences, and how they respond to Mistakes.

“If a child misses a big play, it’s a perfect opportunity to talk about resiliency,” explains Thompson. “I know you’re disappointed and I feel bad for you, but the question is what are you going to do now? Are you going to hang your head? Or are you going to bounce back with renewed determination?”

“The single most important thing we do is help coaches teach kids not to be afraid to make mistakes,” he adds.

In a fast-moving game, things happen in seconds. When a 12-year-old kid makes a mistake on an athletic field, he will immediately look over to his coach or parent. “If the coach is saying, ‘Don’t worry about it,’ it’s actually not very helpful,” notes Thompson. The key is to get rid of the mistake quickly and decisively. So P.C.A. encourages coaches to establish a “mistake ritual.” One technique, adopted by many, is teaching players to “flush” their mistakes. Using a hand gesture that mimics flushing a toilet, a coach can signal from the sideline and players can signal to each other. “So the kid looks at the coach and the coach goes: ‘Flush it.’ The teammates are saying: ‘Hey, Flush it, we’ll get it back.’ And the kid plays better. Because if you’re not beating yourself up, you can focus on the next play.” After the game, the coach can talk to the player about what happened and why.

P.C.A.’s techniques are grounded in the idea that every child has a kind of “emotional tank.” When it gets drained, it’s difficult to take on challenges or perform well. Coaches need to learn to recognize this and adjust accordingly. P.C.A. even has a “magic ratio” — the ideal ratio of positive (i.e., tank filling) statements to criticism — should be 5 to 1.

Focusing on filling the emotional tank is not wimpy or soft. Professional coaches, like Phil Jackson, have used it to great success. It takes effort to do well. Coaches need to observe players closely so they can offer specific and honest feedback. (Kids know false praise when they hear it.)

Nor does it mean a coach can’t have hard conversations with players. The key is not to withhold criticism, but to deliver it in a way that is helpful. If the child is angry or sulking or defensive, she’s not going to be listening very well anyway. “When you ask people to focus on mastery, it’s not soft,” notes Thompson. “And screaming at a kid is not tough. That’s just a lack of impulse control.”

Ken Eriksen, head coach for the U.S.A. Softball Women’s National Team, has incorporated another technique from P.C.A. called the “criticism sandwich.” “I love the philosophy of praise-critique-praise,” he told me, speaking by phone from the Pan American Games in Mexico. “Instead of getting into a kid: ‘Hey, What’s the matter with you? Didn’t we just go over this?’ I like to take the approach: ‘Hey, young lady, you’re doing a great job. You know on that approach to a ground ball, maybe I would use a different footwork. Other than that I cannot commend you enough on your hard work.’ It works so much better.”

“People often think that youth sports are simple, but they are actually very complex,” observes Thompson. “The symbolism of sports is so powerful. You’ve got coaches whose identity is tied to whether their team wins or not. You’ve got parents who have all this anxiety about their kids being successful and happy, living in a culture that put so much emphasis on winning or getting into the best schools. And you’ve got the kids who are nervous, worried about establishing their own identity, who want to please their parents, and are afraid about looking bad in public.

“But because sports are so valued, we have the opportunity to change the way people relate to their kids through it. Most research indicates that people coach the way they were coached. So you now have kids who

are growing up coached with this model and soon they'll become coaches themselves, so I think the general impact on our society could be huge.”

Have you had a memorable experience with a coach that stuck with you (good or bad)? On Wednesday, I'll respond to comments, provide some more details about P.C.A.'s techniques, and reveal how Thompson told me he would handle each of the scenarios above.



# BASKETBALL COACHING NUGGETS

## VOLUME 10

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- ➔ Free Training Videos: <http://www.youtube.com/StrongerTeamDotCom>

### **Compiled By**

Alan Stein

Blair O'Donovan

Steve Tikoian

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<http://www.strongerteam.com/RegisterNuggets.aspx>

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

[Alan@StrongerTeam.com](mailto:Alan@StrongerTeam.com)

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

**Alan Stein**

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6. [Argentina Passing](#) (Jim Ponchak)

## Greats List

By: Five Star Basketball <http://www.FiveStarBasketball.com>

The following 'greats' list was created by Five Star Basketball – the most storied brand in youth basketball history. Please visit [www.FiveStarBasketball.com](http://www.FiveStarBasketball.com) and join the movement!

### GREAT POST PLAYERS

- Great Post Players knock down their free throws when they get to the line.
- Great Post Players have go-to moves with either hand to use in the paint. They also have a countermove for every move.
- Great Post Players enjoy banging on the interior and setting solid screens.
- Great Post Players are exceptional at help defense. They stop the ball when it's in the paint!
- Great Post Players can hedge on the perimeter and get back to their man QUICKLY.
- Great Post Players draw double-teams, recognize them and react quickly to get the ball to an open teammate.
- Great Post Players never over dribble.
- Great Post Players run the floor – rim to rim – on offense and defense.

### GREAT GUARDS

- Great Guards are relentless on both ends of the court.
- Great Guards use pump-fakes and ball fakes often. They set up the defense to go one way and pass/go the other way.
- Great Guards know not to telegraph their passes. They use their eyes to create deception.
- Great Guards welcome defensive pressure. They see it as an opportunity to score an easy bucket for their team.
- Great Guards are patient with the basketball. They read the defense & act accordingly.
- Great Guards facilitate every facet of the offense.
- Great Guards don't try to find the ball, they let the ball find them!
- Great Guards are ALWAYS communicating with their teammates to ensure cohesiveness.
- Great Guards hustle back on D when they get beat. They set the defensive tone!
- Great Guards rebound their position – they don't leave that to the 'big guys.'
- Great Guards push the ball up the floor and try to find an opening in the defense for themselves or a teammate.
- Great Guards get everybody involved by sharing the basketball.

### GREAT TEAMMATES

- Great Teammates call out screens so their teammate doesn't get clobbered.
- Great Teammates don't care whether they start or come off the bench - they just want to win!
- Great Teammates HYPE their team UP before the game and during halftime.
- Great Teammates are an extension of the coach – on and off the court.
- Great Teammates are positive, supportive, honest, and enthusiastic.

### GREAT TEAMS

- Great Teams dig in on defense until they get the ball or the buzzer sounds. They NEVER give in b/c they're tired.
- Great Teams listen to their coach - they understand that he/she is looking out for their best interests!
- Great Teams know who they want to get the ball to in the clutch - they have a game-plan.
- Great Teams close out games and know how to play with a lead. They also know how to fight back when they are down.

- Great Teams are willing to share the ball on offense - they don't care who scores they just care that they score.

### **GREAT PASSERS**

- Great Passers make scoring easy. They put the ball where it needs to be, when it needs to be there.
- Great Passers can throw every type of pass – with either hand - depending on the situation.
- Great Passers make the simple play, not the flashy play. All they care about is a positive outcome, not how it looks.
- Great Passers fake a pass to make a pass.

### **GREAT REBOUNDERS**

- Great Rebounders are quick off the floor – they anticipate where the ball is going and go get it!
- Great Rebounders just don't want the other team to get the ball - they clear out space for teammates to get the rebound.
- Great Rebounders assume 'shot is taken, shot is missed.'
- Great Rebounders protect the ball after the rebound.
- Great Rebounders attack the glass on both ends of the floor.
- Great Rebounders have soft hands and great body balance.
- Great Rebounders always think the ball belongs to them.
- Great Rebounders find their man when the shot goes up, make contact, block out, then pursue the ball.

### **GREAT SCORERS**

- Great Scorers can beat you in a myriad of ways – they are not one dimensional.
- Great Scorers develop exceptional concentration and focus.
- Great Scorers don't get discouraged if they miss a shot or two. They always think 'my next shot is good.'
- Great Scorers know how to keep the defense off-balance.
- Great Scorers attack their opponent's weaknesses.
- Great Scorers have multiple weapons and keep defenses guessing.
- Great Scorers finish strong, even through contact. They embrace getting fouled!
- Great Scorers know how to control, read and react to their defender.
- Great Scorers know the moves, angles and tricks to create space.
- Great Scorers recognize scoring opportunities and get open easily.
- Great Scorers practice game-like situations against tough competition.
- Great Scorers make great ball fakes and shot fakes. They use their eyes to deceive.
- Great Scorers are comfortable in the paint and can finish around the bucket.
- Great Scorers have confidence in their game. A bad game doesn't phase them.
- Great Scorers can score from all three levels. They have their 3-pt, mid-range, and interior games on lock.
- Great Scorers run hard on the break and get points off of offensive rebounds. They always look for 'easy' buckets.
- Great Scorers make free throws. Period.
- Great Scorers can get their shots off quickly, but without 'rushing.'

### **GREAT DEFENDERS**

- Great Defenders take pride in deflecting passes.
- Great Defenders have their heads on a swivel and see the entire court (always see their man and the ball).
- Great Defenders play the pick & roll effectively - they hedge with a purpose!
- Great Defenders delay the other team from getting into their offensive sets. They keep the offense out of rhythm and control the tempo.
- Great Defenders pay attention to the scouting report and film sessions. They know who the other team's best players are.
- Great Defenders are CONSTANTLY talking - they relay information quickly & efficiently.

- Great Defenders are NOT afraid to take a charge - in fact, they embrace it.
- Great Defenders dive on the floor for loose balls whenever the situation presents itself.
- Great Defenders communicate when they are double-teaming or when a screen is coming.
- Great Defenders don't gamble. They make the right play, the easy play, the smart play.
- Great Defenders know that THIS possession is THE most important possession of the game – regardless of time and score.
- Great Defenders play aggressively but intelligently.
- Great Defenders never take a play off. Resting is NOT in their vocabulary.
- Great Defenders dictate what the offense is going to do.
- Great Defenders approach each game thinking 'I'm going to shut my guy down tonight.'
- Great Defenders do not let the ball go to the middle of the floor on penetration.
- Great Defenders understand the concept of 'ball-you-man.'
- Great Defenders keep the offense uncomfortable and off balance as often as they can.
- Great Defenders understand that defense wins championships. If the other team can't score, they can't win.
- Great Defenders don't commit lazy or stupid fouls.

## What You Knee'd to Know: Tidbits and Facts about ACL Injuries

- There are an estimated 200,000 ACL injuries every year in the United States.
- Female athletes are 5-8 times more likely to suffer an ACL injury than males.
- 70% of ACL injuries are non-contact, they are a result from improper landing, cutting, & pivoting.
- The ACL provides approximately 90% of the knee joint's stability.
- The highest incidence of ACL injuries is in females 15-25 years old who participate in sports which require jumping, quick change of direction & pivoting.
- The ACL is located inside the knee joint and stabilizes the joint by preventing the shinbone (tibia) from sliding forward beneath the thighbone (femur).
- The cause of most ACL tears is a sudden, abrupt change in force to the knee. This can occur during planting & cutting or when landing from a jump.
- Many genetic factors contribute to ACL injuries in females: a wider pelvis and larger "Q" angle, greater hip varus, knee valgus and foot pronation.
- Many trainable factors contribute to ACL injuries in females: smaller hamstring to quadriceps strength ratio, poor recruitment of the hamstrings during landing & weak hip abductors.
- There is no such thing as an ACL injury PREVENTION program. It is actually an ACL injury REDUCTION program (you can't prevent all injuries).
- A quality ACL injury reduction program should seek to enhance: balance, body / joint awareness, movement technique & muscle strength.
- One of the keys to the success of an ACL injury reduction program is the ability to teach proper jumping and landing mechanics.
- Players need to learn to land with their weight distributed along the mid-foot. They should not land on their toes or ball of their foot.
- An easy way to teach this is to practice landing barefoot on a soft surface. Use a verbal cue of a "quiet landing".
- Avoid "knocked knee'd" position in both jumping and landing.
- Land with "chest over knees over feet" to improve balance and stability.
- Absorb shock with ankles, knees and hips (quiet landing, no bouncing).
- Land toe to heel (but NOT tip-toed) and quickly distribute weight to entire foot.
- Plant at 90 degrees (perpendicular to where you are going, T-step).
- ACL injury reduction workouts should include mobility exercises for the ankles and hips and stability exercises for the knees.
- ACL injury reduction workouts should also include drills for proper landings, decelerating, and cutting.
- ACL injury reduction workouts should also include exercises to strengthen all of the muscles in the lower extremities and core.



## 2012 Challenge

By: Alan Stein

We are mid-way through January and the average person has already given up on their New Year's Resolutions! How are *you* doing with yours?

I have never been big on *resolutions*... but have always loved *challenges*.

### **Here are 18 challenges for you in 2012:**

- #1: Establish one new positive habit every month.
- #2: Eliminate one negative habit every month.
- #3: Make your bed every day.
- #4: Read something positive/inspirational/educational for 30 minutes every day.
- #5: Do NOT text/Tweet while driving (not even at red lights!)... ever.
- #6: Leave your comfort zone (physically, emotionally, or mentally) every day.
- #7: Review your short (< 6 months), intermediate (1-3 years) and long term (> 5 years) goals every week.
- #8: Eat a healthy breakfast every day.
- #9: Tell someone you appreciate them every day.
- #10: Read 12 books AND listen to 12 Audiobooks over the course of the year.
- #11: Review the following days' 'to-do' list every night before you go to bed.
- #12: Limit excess sugar, alcohol, saturated fat, and processed foods every day.
- #13: 'Unplug' from your computer, phone, TV and tablet every evening and spend quality time with your family.
- #14: Sit in complete silence (no phones, computers, TV, etc.) for 15 minutes every day.
- #15: Limit watching traditional news outlets: TV, radio or newspaper (trust me, you can stay informed & educated without the unnecessary negativity).
- #16: Accept 100% responsibility for your fitness level, financial status, relationships, and overall happiness.
- #17: Go on a 'Digital Detox' (no electronics of any kind) for one entire week at some point during the year.
- #18: Live present every day. Enjoy now. Don't wait for something or someone to make you happy in the future. Be happy NOW.

## I've Learned

By: Alan Stein

I recently read the book, Live and Learn and Pass It On by H. Jackson Brown, Jr. (I highly recommend it).

With my 36<sup>th</sup> birthday approaching, I decided to highlight the posts from the book that I found most applicable to me:

- I've learned it doesn't cost anything to be nice.
- I've learned that most of the things I worry about never actually happen.
- I've learned you can get by on charm for about 15 minutes... after that you better know something.
- I've learned that every great achievement was once considered impossible.
- I've learned that the greatest challenge in life is figuring out what is truly important and disregarding everything else.
- I've learned that trust is the single most important factor in both personal and business relationships.
- I've learned that nothing of value comes without effort. Nothing.
- I've learned that a person is only as good as their word.
- I've learned that you should always leave loved ones with loving words... it may be the last time you see them.
- I've learned that the ache of unfulfilled dreams is the worst pain of all.
- I've learned that you can do something in an instant that can give you a lifetime of heartache.
- I've learned that if you care, it shows.
- I've learned that education, experience, and memories are 3 things no one can ever take from you.
- I've learned that it is OK to enjoy your success, but you should never quite believe it.
- I've learned that a good reputation is a tremendous asset.
- I've learned to never ask a tire salesman if you need new tires.
- I've learned that people are as happy as they decide to be.
- I've learned it is easier to stay out of trouble than it is to get out of trouble.
- I've learned there is no elevator to success... you have to take the stairs.
- I've learned that if you don't focus on the money but on doing a great job, the money will come.
- I've learned that if there were no problems there would be no opportunities.
- I've learned that people are more influenced by how much I care rather than how much I know.
- I've learned that people only allow themselves to be as successful as they believe they deserve to be.
- I've learned that is OK to be content with what you have... but never with what you are.
- I've learned that EVERY person's greatest need in life is to feel appreciated.
- I've learned that you will ALWAYS make the time for the things that are truly important to you.
- I've learned that you never get rewarded for the things you intended to do.
- I've learned that you can't expect the very best in life if you don't give your very best in life.
- I've learned that many people give up right before they were about to taste success.
- I've learned the best to appreciate something is to be without it for a while.
- I've learned that it takes just as much time and energy to wish as it does to plan.
- I've learned that you shouldn't speak unless you can improve the silence.
- I've learned that most people don't look for the truth, the simply look for someone to agree with them.
- I've learned that when you have several tasks, do the hardest one first, then the rest will be a snap.
- I've learned that the easiest way to find happiness is to quit complaining.
- I've learned that everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all of the happiness and growth occurs during the climb.
- I've learned that children follow examples, not advice.
- I've learned that you shouldn't spend any time today worrying about yesterday.
- I've learned that smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks.

- I've learned that I don't have the right to complain about something if I had the power to change it and didn't.
- I've learned the more mistakes I make the smarter I get.
- I've learned that if you wouldn't write it down and sign it, you probably shouldn't say it.
- I've learned that happiness is not how much you have, but your capacity to enjoy what you have.
- I've learned that you can live with the choices you have made yourself, but you live to regret the choices you let others make for you.
- I've learned that if you spend your time looking forward to something else, you miss out on the present.
- I've learned that we judged on what we finish, not what we start.
- I've learned that good advice is no better than bad advice unless you take it.
- I've learned that wisdom is not how much you know but what you do with what you know.
- I've learned that dreams are where we are going, hard is work is how we get there.
- I've learned that good habits are the shortest route to the top.
- I've learned you shouldn't talk about what you are going to do. Do it... then talk.
- I've learned there are only two classes; first class and no class.
- I've learned that giving doesn't count if you don't want what you are giving away.

## Why I Don't Hunt Geese

By: University of Washington

\*\*\*As geese flap their wings, they create uplift for the bird following. By flying together in a V formation, the flock's flying range is 71% greater than that of any bird flying alone.

When we share a common direction and sense of community, we can get where we are going more quickly and easily because we are traveling on the energy of another.

\*\*\*When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone, and quickly gets back into form to take advantage of the lifting power of the birds in front.

When we have as much sense as geese, we will stay in formation with those who are headed where we want to go; we will be willing to accept their help as well as give ours to others.

\*\*\*The geese formation honk to encourage those up front to keep their speed. When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose files out the point position.

When we take turns doing the hard tasks, when we encourage others, we become stronger through shared leadership.

\*\*\*When a goose gets sick or wounded, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it is able to fly again or dies. They then launch out on their own to find another formation or to catch up with the flock.

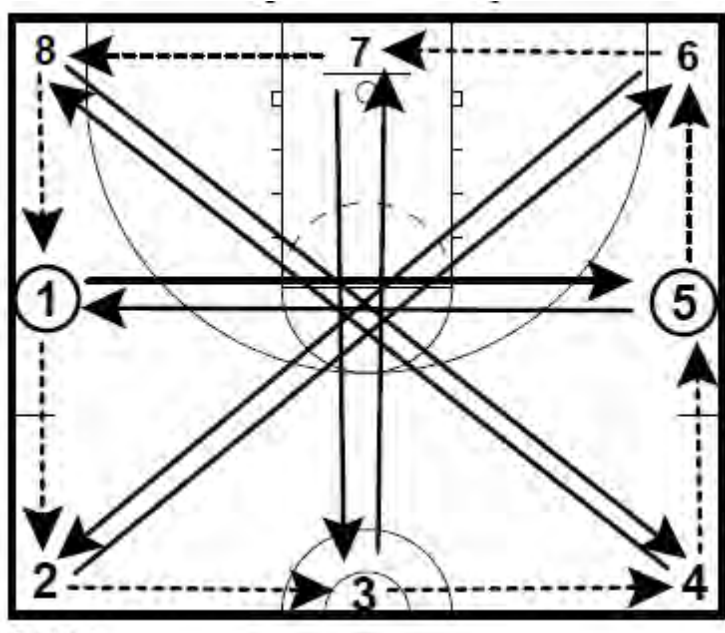
When we have learned the value of teamwork, we too will stand by each other in challenging times. Let us fly in formation and remember to drop back to help those who need it.

## Argentina Passing

By: Jim Ponchak <http://www.twitter.com/coachponchak>

### Setup:

- There are 8 players on the court, 1 in each corner and 1 halfway between each corner
- The drill is run with 2 balls, the balls always start with players who are opposite each other
- Every pass has a name (call the name of the person you are passing to before you pass the ball)
- The players must stay inbounds and throw straight line passes
- The drill can be run in the half-court or full-court
- The drill should be run for 45 seconds to 1 minute



- Pass the ball to the right
- Sprint across the court and exchange spots with the player across the court
- Passers are allowed 1 pump fake if the receiver is not there



# BASKETBALL COACHING NUGGETS

## VOLUME 11

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

**Alan Stein**

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1. [10 Important Questions Coaches Must Answer](#) (Tom Crean and Ralph Pim)
2. [Coaches of Excellence](#) (Rod Olson)
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4. [Real Toughness](#) (James E. Loehr)
5. [Rule of 10,000 Hours](#) (Mike Neighbors)

## 10 Important Questions Coaches Must Answer

By: Tom Crean and Ralph Pim

1. Why do you want to coach? Explain the driving force for wanting to be in the coaching profession.
2. Are you willing to dedicate yourself 24 hours a day, seven days a week, if necessary for your players and fellow coaches?
3. Is your family willing and able to bear the sacrifices?
4. Are you willing to lead by example in everything that you do? This will require you to live your life in a “fishbowl” with your professional and personal life always open to view.
5. Do you have the personal courage to live by your core values and make tough decisions regardless of the consequences?
6. Are you passionate about teaching and dedicated to helping others improve their lives?
7. Do you possess the knowledge, energy, and tenacity to lead your program to excellence?
8. Are you willing to take full responsibility for everything that happens, or doesn't happen, in your program?
9. Do you understand that loyalty is a two-way street?
10. Are you entering the profession fully understanding the risks in coaching and knowing that you may be relieved of your job at any time?

### How good are you with adapting to change in your program?

*By Matt Monroe, Head Sophomore Coach – Saint Patrick High School (Chicago)*

A major key in developing your program and sustaining success is your ability to be adaptable as a coach. Too many coaches want their players to adapt to their system. Not enough coaches understand that they need to be flexible enough to mold many parts of their system to suit the type of players that they have.

### 5 Reasons to be Adaptable:

1. You're able to maximize your players' strengths and hide their weaknesses.
2. You're able to keep your program fresh.
3. You become more versatile as a coach.
4. It increases your players' enjoyment: They like playing a way that fosters their success (ex. Athletic players like to run and pressure, shooters often like to score off screens, slashers enjoy offenses that utilize a lot of drive and kick action, etc.) Players are more comfortable in a system that fits them.
5. You have the ability to give players some ownership in your program.  
Every year we meet at the end of the season and evaluate all aspects of our program. We take a look at what went well and what didn't; and we explore the reasons why. Once our program evaluation is complete, we look into the future and discuss what our team is going to look like next year. We spend much of the off-season studying other programs and discussing how we can adapt what we do to maximize the ability and potential of our players.

Being adaptable does not mean compromising the foundation on which your program is built. There are many areas in which we're more than flexible with. However, there are principles that we are unwilling to waver on. Some ideals that we will not change are: the way we expect our players to carry themselves on and off the court, practice structure and intensity, the importance of work ethic and teamwork, and player development to name a few. You need to decide which of your program principles are “concrete,” or ones that you will always adhere to, and which principles are “flexible,” or ones that you're willing to modify or abandon depending on the type of team that you have.

### 8 Things to Consider When Evaluating Your Program:

1. Player individual strengths and weaknesses



2. Team strengths and weaknesses
3. “Concrete” principles
4. “Flexible” principles
5. Strengths and weaknesses of your coaching staff
6. Conference style of play
7. Player IQ
8. “Uncontrollables” (gym set up, court time, schedule, etc.)

**Once you decide on the changes and modifications you want to make to your program, you must:**

- Study it inside and out
- Communicate the plan clearly to your assistant coaches and players
- Overemphasize good actions that support the new parts of your system
- Be patient and understand that it will take time to fully implement everything you want to.

**Additional thoughts on having an adaptable program:**

- Understand that what works for someone else might not necessarily work for you.
- Don't typecast yourself as a coach – be willing to change and grow.
- Implement a system that teaches your players how to play.
- Be open to new ideas – study, study, study!
- Keep many of your program principles constant each year, but be flexible on others.
- What worked for you in the past might not work for you.

## Coaches of Excellence by Rod Olson

By: Brian Vecchio, Assistant Men's Basketball Coach Manitou Springs H.S.

**"You can't play today's game by yesterday's rules"**

### What is a Coach of Excellence?

- Same person in sport, home, and work
- Keeps perspective and makes it fun
- Prioritizes developing servant leaders
- Mentally tough-comfortable with being uncomfortable
- 3:1 ratio of praise to criticism

### 21st Century Coach of Excellence

- "Easy to please, hard to satisfy"
- Consistency breeds excellence, excellence breeds trust, trust breeds loyalty
- "Great leaders can't give away what they don't possess themselves"
- Must have a failure philosophy! (Admit it. Fix it. Don't repeat it!)
- Great coaches find ways to get players "all in"
- Establish your OWN identity
- Two non-negotiables: Humility and non-stop learner
- You are too close if you can't hold players accountable!
- Manipulates situations daily that athletes will encounter
- Can teach all types of learners at once (audio, visual, intrapersonal)
- Can get players "on fire" about something!
- Coach to player-player will retain 70% of what you said
- Player 1-Player 2-will retain 85% of what is said
- Player 2-another player after having learned skill-95% retention rate
- Principles and values don't change, the "how evolves"
- Sterile communication on a team=sterile results
- Each coach is at a different place in the journey! Get better every day!
- Coach attitude and effort before X's and O's

### 3 Dimensional Coaching (3 questions to ask yourself)

1. Why do you coach? (Inside-Out Coaching)
2. What is your philosophy?
3. How do you measure success?

### Level I

- Competency (strategy, techniques, biomechanics)
- Lots of info out there for coaches to improve
- 80-85% of coaches

### Level II

- Mind of the Athlete
- Psychology
- 10% of coaches

### Level III

- Relationship EXPERT
- Critique without resentment
- “Do you know “what time it is?”
- 5% of all coaches

### Coaching Thoughts

- There is a double standard about teaching and coaching. Must be both!
- Create a climate and culture that values people over productivity
- Want to know if you are a good coach...ask your worst player
- Only job w/ higher divorce rate is law enforcement
- Do you have a bat phone? (Direct line of communication w/ team)
- Are you just “coaching” or do you “care”?
- Do you have self-control routines for yourself?
- Assistant coaches are in charge of HC in heated moments
- Give feedback
- No feedback-coach that rolls out balls and lets “athletes be”
- Over feedback- “paralysis by analysis”
- Best know just the right time and right thing to say!
- “You’re either coaching it, or allowing it to happen”
- Coach Obvious/Knowledge of Result- “Catch the ball”
- Knowledge of Process-checklist, specific feedback, drill that isolates problem
- Speak Greatness into others
- Cursing and sarcasm not effective with 21st century kid. Tune you out!
- Replace “but” with “now” when talking to players. “I like your release, now try to get your elbow over your knee”
- Be Uncommon. Sprint back after a made basket.
- “See what people can be, not what they are.”

### 21st Century Players

- Top 2 ways they communicate - USE THEM; DON'T FIGHT THEM
  - Facebook-Every team should have a page!
  - Texting
- Right and wrong is determined by age 13
- What happened to the “gym rat”? Players have evolved and changed
- 50 million sports participants ages 6-14, by age 15 only 7 million
- #1 predictor of success is self-talk
- Now dealing with 2nd crop of “trophy generation”

### 10 Expectations 21st Century Athletes Have

1. They want to contribute immediately
2. They want to feel important and do important things
3. They want to receive feedback immediately
4. They want to be treated as an individual
5. They want to have access to the head the coach
6. They want to experience meaningful relationships
7. They want a plan of measureable growth steps
8. They want to learn from their peers
9. They want to see results quickly
10. They want coaches to be innovative and have high expectations

### Additional Thoughts

- 90% of plane crashes in US are caused by pilot error. Have a checklist!
- Can't have a "scoreboard hangover mentality". The past can't affect the future!
- "I want to honor your time".as a way of reengaging listeners when you speak
- Old coaches must learn from new coaches and vice versa (community of learners)
- "I won't know if I'm a good parent until I see my grandchild act up in front of my son."

### **Giving Feedback-Think Before You Speak**

T-True

H-Helpful

I-Inspire

N-Necessary

K-Kind

## Alan Stein: Coaching U Newsletter

The following piece was a feature by Alan Stein for a recent **Coaching U Newsletter**. Their FREE newsletter is a tremendous resource. You can sign up for it at <http://CoachingULive.com> and follow them at [www.Twitter.com/Coaching\\_U](http://www.Twitter.com/Coaching_U).

### Winner's Mentality

A winner's mentality is a focused form of confidence. And confidence must be earned through demonstrated performance, discipline, effort, and consistency. A winner's mentality comes from a daily commitment to excellence. You can't just wake up and have a winner's mentality, you have to *earn* it.

The fascinating part is, confidence is contagious. Unfortunately so is a lack of confidence. You work hard, smart, and consistently... and you win more often than not. The more you win, the higher your confidence. The winner's mentality feeds itself.

A winner's mentality also means that you are more focused on what *you* do than on what your *opponent* does. Winners focus on what they can control:

- **Effort**
- **Attitude**
- **Preparation**
- **Execution**

As Coach John Wooden once said, ***"Don't worry about them, let them worry about you."*** That my friends, is a winner's mentality!

Being a winner is believing that on any given night, you can beat anyone. But it is also being humble enough to admit that on any given night, anyone can beat you.

Most importantly, teams with a winner's mentality only care about one thing – *winning*. No personal agendas. The team always comes first. Every player (and coach) on the team knows their role, accepts their role, takes pride in their role, and fulfills their role to the best of their ability – no exceptions.

### Play Through Adversity

Do you want the good news or the bad news?

The bad news? *Every* team will experience some form of adversity... every game. It's inevitable.

The good news? ***"If handled correctly, adversity can be the prerequisite to great things."***

You must embrace adversity. Don't expect anything to be easy. Assume the other team will go on runs, that's part of the game. Expect that your team will go through shooting slumps, that's part of the game as well. You obviously want to do your best to prevent both, but just know they *will* happen!

Do you think a boxer goes into the ring thinking he's not going to get hit? Of course not. He knows he's going to get punched. Same is true in hoops. Expect the 'punch.' And keep fighting!

Now, when the other team goes on a run or your team goes in a slump, follow this simple advice:

***"When you find yourself in a hole, the first thing you need to do is stop digging."***

Opponents' runs and your slumps are often caused because you stop doing the little things. Every player needs to immediately focus on being solid:

- **Making the right play on both ends of the floor.**

- **Making the easy pass.**
- **Boxing out on every shot.**
- **Setting solid screens.**
- **Running the floor in both directions.**
- **Hustling on and off the floor during time-outs.**
- **Having good body language and eye contact with your coach.**
- **Contesting all shots.**

In many instances, a recommitment to being solid will end the adversity and turn things back around!

Lastly, the key to both the **winner's mentality** and to **playing through adversity** is **mental toughness**. Many coaches define mental toughness as the ability to tolerate physical discomfort or screaming expletives. But I disagree.

Mental toughness is simply the ability to **Play Present**. To focus on what you have 100% control over – your effort and your attitude. To focus on the next play. To focus on the process of winning, not the outcome. When you Play Present, you maximize your potential.

## Real Toughness

By: James E. Loehr

- **Real Toughness** is consistently performing well under pressure.
- Many players fall short of their dreams because they couldn't execute under pressure. They lacked **Real Toughness**.
- **Real Toughness** includes concentration, competitiveness, confidence, and poise under pressure.
- **Real Toughness** is the greatest strength an athlete can have.
- **Real Toughness** training is the art and science of increasing your ability to handle all kinds of stress – physical, mental, and emotional.
- A key to **Real Toughness** is your ability to improve your 'recovery from stress' routine – not only in between games, but in between plays!
- **Real Toughness** training will make your mind, body, and emotions more flexible, responsive, resilient, and stronger.
- Talent is your genetic potential (what Mother Nature 'gave' you). But **Real Toughness** is a skill... it can be improved through proper training.
- There are countless myths about the definition of **Real Toughness**. It has nothing to do with being mean, cold, hard, ruthless, calloused, or insensitive.
- **Real Toughness** is about being flexible, responsive, and resilient under pressure.
- **Real Toughness** is about emotional flexibility, emotional strength, emotionally responsiveness, and emotional resiliency.
- **Real Toughness** is the ability to consistently perform toward the upper range of your talent and skill regardless of competitive circumstances.
- **Real Toughness** is a skill that allows you to maximize your talent.
- **Real Toughness** is the ability to consistently access and use empowering emotions during competition.
- **Real Toughness** is finding a psychological and physiological balance to maximize your performance consistently.
- **Real Toughness** is about developing 'performer' skills – the ability to perform at your maximum regardless of how you 'feel.' Great athletes are great 'actors!'
- **Real Toughness** requires disciplined thinking and imagery skills.
- **Real Toughness** is not letting hostile crowds, poor officiating, perceived jet lag, or a tough opponent affect your performance.
- **Real Toughness** is tough thinking and tough acting!
- You can only sustain **Real Toughness** with proper recovery – sleep/naps, proper diet, stretching, foam roll, etc.
- Personal awareness is the first and most important step in achieving **Real Toughness**.
- **Real Toughness** can only be achieved by being in great physical shape. Your fitness determines your mental toughness ceiling.

The preceding concepts were taken from the book, **The New Toughness Training for Sports** by James E. Loehr. Ironically, the book isn't 'new' as it came out in the early 1990's... but is still an invaluable resource. I highly recommend it!

## Rule of 10,000 Hours

By: Mike Neighbors

Over the last two years, I have mentioned in the NEWSLETTER the author Malcolm Gladwell is my favorite new writer in years. His mind works in a unique way and has a great ability to make his somewhat scientific approaches readable and entertaining. I think much of his work pertains directly to what we as coaches face on a day to day basis in dealing with players, the society they are growing up in, and the challenges that we are presented with 24/7. His books OUTLIERS, TIPPING POINT, and BLINK have provided us with techniques and insights that have helped us in developing team chemistry, navigating obstacles that arise during adversity, and making those tough decisions that separate coaches.

This is a direct link to his webpage to learn more about him and his works... <http://www.gladwell.com/outliers/index.html>

In his book OUTLIERS, Gladwell dedicated a chapter to the RULE OF 10,000 HOURS and

I immediately began applying it to coaching. Gladwell used the research and studies of K. Anders Ericsson. Ericsson began his research at Berlin's Academy of Music. Using the

music students that attended, Ericsson divided a group of violinists in three groups:

- 1) STARS with world class potential
- 2) merely "good"
- 3) unlikely to ever play professionally

He then did a survey of each of three groups asking them to roughly estimated the number of hours they had practiced up until this point in their life. Will the same question posed to all three groups he learned:

- A) roughly all began at the same age (5 years old)
- B) all practiced about the same amount of time for the next 3 years
- C) after 3 years the three groups separated virtually across the boards in the three categories that they found themselves in
- D) by the age of 20 those still practicing over 30 hours a week found themselves as the STARS with world class potential

He then took his study to the pianists at the school... same results

Every focus group he surveys produced across the board results reflecting the same out- comes. From this it became easy to deduce that you could NOT find a "natural" who made it to the top without 10,000 hours of practice. You could also NOT find a "grinder" who outworked people with more talent. It took a certain level of excellence for them to be accepted to attend the prestigious music academy, but it was the practice (or level of commitment) that separated them once they got there.

Gladwell then takes you through a series of examples of people (many of whom I have al- ways considered NATURALS) and HOW they were able to get their 10,000 hours of experience to reach their excellence.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was someone I always believed to be a "prodigy" but although he was composing and playing at the age of six it wasn't until a much older age of 21 that his masterpieces began to flow... guess when? Almost exactly to the 10,000 hour rule.



The Beatles were not the overnight success I always believed. They didn't just invade the United States with their floppy haircuts and reach excellence. They had been together for 7 years and reached their 10,000 hours as a lucky break of having to play in Hamburg gigs for 7 to 8 hour straight at times to make enough money to survive. In just three years of returning to Hamburg they logged over 1,200 performances!!

Bill Gates. Father was a wealthy lawyer, mother was daughter of a well to do banker. As a result he lands at Lakeside Private School. It just so happened the Seattle area school was also home to computer lab during a time when most universities didn't even have one. Through a series of chance meetings he and Paul Allen end up logging more computer time than anyone in the world because they were at an age when they had the time and the opportunity to reach their 10,000 hours before anyone else could. Needless to say they made the most of that!!!

There are many more you can read about in the book.

This got me to thinking about basketball players. Did this rule of 10,000 hours apply to athletes as well?

I started with the math side of 10,000 hours. Let's say that someone worked 1000 hours a year. That is 2:43 per day every day (which no single person is able to actually do especially at an early age). Even with that number that would take 10 years for a player to reach a level of excellence. So for a player to be reaching a level of excellence by the time they become recruit-able for colleges, they need to have started around the age of 6. Now factor in the fact that most players don't practice two and a half hour a day at that age, it's a little more realistic that they are going to be reaching their peaks closer to 18 or 19... Now factor in that many of today's school districts not only do not provide but DISCOURAGE competitive play at a young age... Now factor in limited youth coaching opportunities... Now factor in the very real free of burning out a young athlete. Now, it is easier for me to understand why our players come in as freshmen to compete with upper classmen who are reaching their level of excellence. It is easier to understand why a player who didn't pick a ball up until they were 12 cannot be expected to be near a level of excellence.

Now look at yourself as a coach. Have you put in 10,000 hours? If you have, was it around that time frame that you seemed to "really get it?"

If this line of thinking intrigues you and you believe would give you some insights into the worlds of your players and maybe even help you understand yourself, you need to pick up a Malcolm Gladwell's book OUTLIERS... If you enjoy that one, move on to BLINK... then finish it up with TIPPING POINT.



# BASKETBALL COACHING NUGGETS

## VOLUME 12

### **Important**

Any exercise information presented on these pages is intended as an educational resource and is not intended as a substitute for proper medical advice. Consult your physician or health care professional before performing any of the exercises described on these pages or any exercise technique or regimen, particularly if you have chronic or recurring medical conditions. Discontinue any exercise that causes you pain or severe discomfort and consult a medical expert. Neither the author nor advertisers of this document make any warranty of any kind in regard to the content of the information presented and accept no responsibility for its misuse.

### **Additional Resources**

For additional basketball specific strength & conditioning resources, please visit:

- ➔ Stronger Team | Alan Stein's Blog: <http://Blog.StrongerTeam.com>
- ➔ Training Products, Guides, Workouts, Programs: <http://Shop.StrongerTeam.com>
- ➔ Stronger Team Information, Schedules, Articles, Services: <http://www.StrongerTeam.com>
- ➔ Free Training Videos: <http://www.youtube.com/StrongerTeamDotCom>

### **Compiled By**

Alan Stein

Blair O'Donovan

Steve Tikoian

## 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:

<http://www.strongerteam.com/RegisterNuggets.aspx>

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

[Alan@StrongerTeam.com](mailto:Alan@StrongerTeam.com)

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

**Alan Stein**

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## 35 Things I Learned from Coach Knight

I'm thankful to have had the opportunity to hear Coach Bob Knight speak at a Nike Championship Basketball Clinic in Tunica, MS on May 5, 2012. He provided a flurry of invaluable coaching nuggets!

I'm happy to pay his wisdom forward. I have always believed that "a candle loses nothing by lighting another candle." Coaches *should* share!

Coach Knight was introduced as a 'teacher's teacher and a coach's coach.' That was the perfect description.

Here are several take-a-ways from his presentation:

1. "The single most important aspect of coaching is running effective practices."
2. "The goal is to make practice more difficult, physically and mentally, than anything your players will face during a game."
3. "I always designed my practice plans the night before and then made tweaks a few hours before practice began."
4. "I never let a player shoot by themselves; they had to have a rebounder. Shooting by yourself is not game specific."
5. "I hate casual shooting. EVERY shot must be preceded by working to get open and catch and shoot under game like conditions."
6. "Everything in my practices were designed for advantage vs. disadvantage. Putting players in a disadvantage forces them to communicate and concentrate."
7. "I began every practice for 40 years with simple 4 corner passing drill that required absolute concentration."
8. Coach Knight to player, "Son, if you can't listen and follow instructions then you can't play."
9. "My practices were not set up to be easy or enjoyed."
10. "The shot fake is the least used skill on offense. Why would you ever shoot under pressure? An effective shot fake creates an offensive advantage."
11. "We did partner shot fake drills for a few minutes every practice."
12. "Offensively, stay away from the baseline. The baseline is the best defender in the game!"
13. "What is the best thing you can do in a close game? DRIVE to the basket and put pressure on the defense! Not jack up jump shots."
14. "Driving to the basket creates easier shots, better passing angles, and puts the other team in foul trouble."
15. "90% of all defensive fouls are committed with the hands. We do several drills every practice with the players' hands behind their backs."
16. "Defense should be played with your feet and your brain, not your hands."
17. "Every drill we do involves full court transition. Even if we are working on half-court offense, the defense will go in transition after a rebound or made shot."
18. "Basketball is a full court game, so every drill must be done full court."
19. "At any point during practice, call a time-out. Huddle the players and give them 4 or 5 specific instructions. Then send them back on the court. "Wait 15 seconds and then ask them to write down the 4 or 5 things you asked them to do. It is scary how little they will recall."
20. "Players must be able to carry out simple instructions from the bench to the court. If they can't, then they can't play."
21. Defense 101: "When the ball hits the floor, defensive help is mandatory."
22. "Shoot FT's at scheduled intervals during practice, not before/after. Do it when they are tired. Add pressure to every FT (run sprints, etc.)."
23. "First stat I look at after the game – did we make more FT's than our opponent shot? If so, we usually won."

24. "Michael Jordan is the greatest player to play any team sport."
25. "Every halftime, find something the team needs to improve. Also acknowledge something they did well."
26. "From October to Christmas break, our practices were 2 hrs and 15 min. Every practice after that was 1 hr 15 or 1 hr and 30 min tops."
27. Offense 101: "Move the ball against the zone. Move players against man to man."
28. Offense 101: "Passing is your best weapon against man to man. Dribble penetration is your best weapon against zone."
29. "When playing vs. man to man, the defense decides who guards who. When playing against zone, the offense decides who guards who."
30. "Pass fakes make the zone move. Use them!"
31. Coach Knight to player, "Son, you should try thinking sometime. It's really a neat experience."
32. "Screening is the most underutilized, yet most effective weapon an offense has."
33. "The toughest offense to guard is one that has 5 players constantly moving. 5 players that must be guarded."
34. "Don't complicate winning."
35. "More games are lost my dumb than are won by smart."

A final thought: Coach Knight put more emphasis on the mental part of the game, on listening and following directions, than any coach/clinician I had ever seen!

## Great Point Guards

By: NBA veteran coach, Gordon Chiesa (@gchiesaohmy)  
Shared By: Phillip Beckner

- The NBA is a Point Guard driven league
- The hardest position in the NBA to learn and master is the “point guard position”
- There are two kinds of Point Guards:
  1. “New School” - aggressive, looking to score points early by creating off the dribble.
  2. “Old School” - try to execute the offense by getting other players shots early. As the shot clock winds down, they become more aggressive in looking for their shot.
- The Point Guard position is about “winning intangibles.” The best ones make it special by their assists, leadership, clutch shooting, and defense!
- About NBA Point Guards: You never want your point guard to be so “Shot Happy” that he doesn’t get his teammates involved first in the flow of the “Team Offense”.
- **Good Point Guards** will always see the floor, control the tempo of the game, make timely jump shots, and uncanny lay-ups in the lane.
- **Good Point Guards** should have an assist to turnover ratio of 3 to 1.
- **Good Point Guards** play the game “one pass ahead”. They feel/see the “play” before it happens.
- **Good Point Guards** learn to limit their own personal “emotional fogs” during games by playing forward, not backwards. Stay focused to lead!
- **Good Point Guards** respect the ball. Their focus is to get as many offensive possessions as possible by not committing “reckless turnovers”.
- **Good Point Guards** understand how/when to count internally, when the shot clock is winding down. This “mental countdown” creates confidence.
- **Good Point Guards** master the intellectual, physical and verbal challenges of playing the position by consistently making “big plays”.
- **Good Point Guards** have that “instinctive mental balance” of understanding when to look to score, and when to get their teammates going.
- **Good (Back-up) Point Guards** have an underrated impact towards winning by being ready to play due to injuries, foul trouble, and speed match-ups!
- **Good Point Guards** add value to their teams by scoring and creating in the open floor. They’re “tempo changers” of velocity and emotions.

## Assistant Coaches Code

By: Kevin Eastman (@KevinEastman)

1. It's not your team... it's the Head Coach's team. Respect that.
2. Add value to everything you do, every day.
3. Enforce the team's culture and confront those not living up to the standards of the program.
4. If you find a problem, find a solution.
5. Have positive body language at all times (on/off court).
6. Get players off the fence. Encourage and motivate them to buy in.
7. Bring energy/enthusiasm every day. You get what you bring!
8. Be prepared to speak when the Head Coach wants input. Speak honestly.
9. Know the difference between emotion and evaluation.
10. Find your Head Coach's needs and fill them!