

Basketball Mental Aspects - Things to think about...

From the Coach's Clipboard Basketball Playbook, @ <http://www.coachesclipboard.net>

On Team Concepts:

There is no "I" in "team".

If you feel you are the best, or one of the best players on the team, then you must feel extra responsibility for making the team and each other team member better.

A championship team, is more than a collection of five good individual players. It requires at least eight or nine teammates, who work hard together, who respect, help and encourage each other, who have a common goal, mindset and spirit, and yet who all realize their individual roles and importance to the team.

It's not who starts the game; it's who can finish it.

On Defense:

Good offense wins games; great defense, rebounding and hustle wins championships.

Good defense comes from 50% good technique, and 50% inspiration and perspiration.

The best way to get back into the game when you're down 10 points or more, is to play great defense and rebound. Keep the other team from scoring so you can catch up.

On Personal Character and Attitude:

Reputation is what you are perceived to be; character is what you are (John Wooden).

The true athlete must have character, not be a character (John Wooden).

In life you make choices, and your choices make you (John Wooden).

You don't have to win a trophy to be a winner.

In basketball, there is no such thing as a perfect game. Don't get upset if you make a mistake or miss a shot, keep playing hard and things will work out. Remember, a man can fail many times, but he isn't a failure until he gives up. Always think "next play" (Coach K, Duke). "A good garden may have some weeds" (John Wooden).

On Goals:

The journey is more important than the finish line. It's the fun, work, and experiences (good and bad) along the way that ultimately will be the most valuable to your personal growth. If you have prepared, worked your hardest, played fair, and given it your best effort along the way, then no matter what happens, you can be proud and satisfied at the end.

If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail (John Wooden).

To be great is hard, but it's the "hard" (the difficulty) that makes it great...otherwise anyone could do it (Tom Hanks in the movie, "A League Of Their Own").

On Speed and Quickness:

You must be quick, but never hurry (John Wooden).

Other Important "Little Things":

Usually it is unwise to blindly "save" a ball going out-of-bounds under your opponents' basket. Let it go out and reset your defense.

If you are caught trapped in a corner, bounce the ball off the opponent's foot so it goes out-of-bounds. Or call "time-out" if it is a crucial time in the game and a crucial possession. But don't waste all of your coach's time-outs unnecessarily.

When you have a 6 point (or more) lead with only a minute to go in the game, protect the ball and burn the clock. You don't need to score any more points (unless it's an easy lay-up). Remember, "the clock is your enemy" now (Al McGuire). Slow down, run the clock, careful passing, and be prepared to have to make free-throws.

There are "good fouls" (like stopping an obvious score during an important part of the game. Make the opponent shoot the free throws). There are really, stupid "bad fouls" (like fouling someone in the back-court with only 2 seconds left in the period with the bonus in effect). Eliminate stupid fouls so you can use your five fouls for important stuff, like boxing-out, rebounding, posting-up, stopping a crucial shot, etc.

A little tip on staying out of foul trouble: your number of fouls should be less than or equal to the quarter number that you are in. #Fouls <= Quarter #

So, don't get your 2nd foul in the 1st quarter, or your 3rd foul in the 2nd quarter, or your 4th foul in the 3rd quarter, because you will most likely get your 5th foul before the game is over.

If a teammate steals the ball and is driving down the court for a fast-break lay-up, hustle down after him/her. Chances are, you will either get a pass from him/her, or get the rebound and an easy put-back basket. Always assume your teammate is going to miss the lay-up, so you get down there and get the rebound. It's an easy way to score extra points!

To become champions, you must play four good quarters each game. It sounds obvious, but only the good teams do it! Focus on short blocks of time. Break each quarter into four minute segments and focus on winning each segment, so you don't let up the entire game.

There are critical times in a game where key plays make the difference. To become champions, you must learn to recognize these times ("crunch time"), and pick up your intensity on the boards and on defense, and avoid costly turn-overs.

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