

Coaching Witticisms

Telling it like it is

Lifelong lessons learned during a 33 year coaching career

1. All players/individuals fall into one of two categories, those players that get it and those that don't get it. A third category might be those individuals at 30 or 40 years of age who when they finally figure it out, it's too late to do anything about it.
2. Players don't need their Coach to be their friend. They need their coach to be their teacher and mentor. Players need to know their coach cares about them, but this is not the same as being their friend. ((There will be plenty of time for friendship later.)
3. Players will do what you tell them or they will do what you let them.
4. Discipline is not something a coach does to his players; it is something he does for them. A player that has been disciplined deals with it one of two ways. He/She either gets better or he gets bitter.
5. The most powerful motivational force a coach has is "pine time".
6. Give your players some ownership. You can't believe everything they tell you but you better be listening.
7. If your best player is your hardest worker and best role model everyone else falls in line. If your best player is a jerk, you're screwed.
8. The worst comment a player could ever make about his coach, "I just wish coach would have made us work harder".
9. The best compliment a player could ever give his coach; "Coach was the best teacher I ever had".
10. Everyone is a coach. Many fans think they can do your job better than you can.
11. Beware of the typical "know it all fan". The "know it all fan" knows everything there is to know about the game of basketball. He criticizes the coaches, the players, the officials and after the game goes out to the parking lot and can't remember where he parked his car.
12. Keep the lines of communication open with parents, but remember many parents would rather see their son/daughter become all conference, all district or all state, than your team become conference, district or state champs.
13. Administrators don't like surprises. Keep them informed about what is going on in the basketball program.
14. If you don't want to see it in the paper, don't talk about it to the media.
15. One of the toughest things to do in sports is what people expect you to do.
16. All coaching styles can be divided into one or two categories: Those coaches that believe in surprise and change, and those that believe in simplicity of execution.
17. It takes talent to win, but just because you have it is no guarantee you will.
18. Teams with the best talent don't always win championships, but talented teams that play the best together generally do.
19. If you haven't worked it out in practice don't expect to see it happen in a game.
20. It is a lot easier to make suggestions as an assistant coach than it is to make the decisions of a head coach.
21. Every year a coach gets older but the players are always the same age.

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22. The coach that refuses to deal with change is like being on a treadmill. The treadmill always wins.
23. The "tight rope" that all coaches walk today is their ability to adjust their coaching style to better meet the needs of their players in changing society, without sacrificing principles.
24. Never sacrifice principles for victories
25. There are four ways to do anything: 1) any old way to get it done, 2) the wrong way, 3) almost the right way, 4) exactly the right way. A commitment to the discipline and the attention to details necessary to do a thing exactly right vs. almost right, is in the most cases the difference between success and failure.
26. As a coach, everyone is behind you 100%-win or tie, and a coach is only as good as his last victory.
27. Keep your friends close and your enemies closer. Every year that goes by, a coach picks up a few more enemies.
28. As a coach/leader, the harder one works to help everyone accomplish what they want, the quicker a coach/leader can accomplish what he wants.
29. Defense wins championships.
30. In any one season a specific incident/situation can define the success or failure of that season.
31. Nothing is as good as it seems, nothing is as bad as it seems, but somewhere in-between reality falls.
32. A great deal can be accomplished when no one cares who gets the credit.
33. Basketball may be becoming the most over-coached and under taught sport there is.
34. There are reasons and then there are real reasons. Beware of the hidden agenda.
35. Some of the biggest failures in life are those that can't handle success.
36. When a person says "it's not about the money", it's about the money.
37. Never assume anything. (Dissect the work (ass/u/me).
38. You can't make everyone happy. The right decision is not always popular, and just because the decision is popular does not mean it is right.
39. Coaches should avoid making negative comments about their teams, --"We can't shoot, defend, rebound, handle the ball etc.".. The bottom line "quit bitching" about the players and teach them."
40. Surround yourself with good assistants. A successful varsity coach can't do it by himself.
41. Players and Coaches all need to understand that as the years go by very few people will remember how many games you won or lost, but they will remember if you were a good person or not.
42. It takes a very special woman to be a coach's wife.
43. A talented player may gain recognition for a spectacular play, but fundamentally spectacular play within the team concept wins championships.
44. More often than not individual recognition comes about as the result of team success.
45. Motion offense was an outstanding offense before the shot clock. Against the shot clock and a good defensive team, in many cases the motion offense forces the worst shooter to have to take the shot before the time expires. Think about it.

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46. Defense is a constant and offense is a variable, on some nights, the ball just doesn't seem to want to go in the basket. But there is never an excuse for a bad defensive night because good team defense is nothing more than hard work and effort.
47. Many parents raise their kids so they can have it better than they had it while growing up. This is a worthy goal. Unfortunately many parents instead of making it better make the mistake of making it easier.
48. I want to believe that the powers that be that supported the move to class basketball did so because they believed that class basketball would make it better for all the young people we serve, unfortunately in my opinion instead of making it better, class basketball just makes it easier for the player to win trophies.
49. Good players perform, but great players perform and help everyone around them play better.
50. Coaches can control two things: 1) effort, 2) preparation. But they can't control results. In the game of basketball strange things happen, or the other team just has better players.
51. It's never over till it's over
52. Play the first half to get to the second half. You win the game in the second half.
53. Practice all week is the classroom. The games on Friday & Saturday night are the test to see how well the players learned the lessons during the week.
54. Players playing to their potential win more games than players who only play to win.
55. The truly successful basketball coaches use basketball to teach the game of life.

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Steve Witty is the former Coach at Ben Davis High School. During his thirteen year tenure as the varsity Basketball Coach, the Giants recorded more wins than any other team in the state of Indiana, 266-68 (80%). In the 87 year history of one-class tournament, the Giants were the only school to earn four straight trips to the final four. Ben Davis was State Runner-up in 1993 and became only the eighth team to win back to back State Championships in 1995 and 1996. Steve is currently the executive Director of the Indiana Basketball Coaches association. He has written and produced a series of coaching theory books and DVDs. He does individual workouts with players and continues to speak at clinics around the world.