

BOB STARKEY ON SCOUTING

In the days after the national championship game of 2023, LSU Assistant Coach Bob Starkey put out a series of tweets on his philosophy of scouting. Coach Starkey agreed to let me put together these tweets into one form, which I've done here. Great thoughts from one of the best ever to do it; enjoy!

*Thought I'd take today and share some thoughts on scouting. I'll start with it has been a great way for me to learn the game. I started scouting for my high school team when I was in college. Use it as a classroom. Don't just see what a team is doing—seek to understand why

*Not only does looking for the “why” another coach does what he/she does help you gain better understanding in giving your head coach a great scout, but it helps you to gain an understanding of different ways to play.

*As a young coach, I was all about writing down the plays...my schemes were heavy on taking plays away. What I learned from Geno was to be more focused on concepts...are they a ball screen team...a cutting team...work on defending concepts.

*The art is in the details...”they play a 2-3 zone” not enough...what about the coverage? Where is the weak link...Knight taught us against man the opponent sets the match-up but against zones we pick...don't just attack a zone, attack a match-up or coverage.

*Defensively I want to find that one thing that is most important to our opponent's offensive success and work to take that away...you can't take everything away – and you shouldn't try...”cut the head of the snake off.”

*It's not always obvious. You would think stopping Caitlin Clark would be the key to defending Iowa but it wasn't. First, she is phenomenal – the best offensive player I've coached against...average 27 in wins & 30 in losses – and then there was her passing!

-With Iowa as an example, we dug deeper. I love to compare stats of teams when they win as opposed to their losses. Iowa gets 41 points in wins and only 30 in a loss. We adjusted our defense to take away the paint and held them to 24.

-Same with offense. Iowa holds teams to 26 paint points in victory and allows 34 in losses. How, where and when can we attack them in the paint? We scored 34 in the paint.

Big key in scouting; how much information do you give your team? I promise less is more. Don't try to impress your team with all that you know. Give them what they need to succeed.

-An alteration in our scouting reports comes from studying Tim Elmore, where we give information in short, bullet points...not sentences and paragraphs...much more important they take written notes during film than reading everything.

*I love analytics! I think they are important...but they are not the answer alone. I use them like a GPS. Analytics says an opponent was better when they scored in the paint. Got it. Now to pour into film and see how they do it.

*Extra! Study substitution patterns...coaches are creatures of habits...rest a star with a few minutes to go in the quarter...what can we do to attack them during this period...coach goes small – are we prepared?

*Do the work! Be deliberate and intentional in breaking down video. Do prep work...take notes. I still have a template I use to write notes on while watching videos. It is time consuming and tedious, but it takes what it takes.

*I'm also old school. I want to watch entire complete games and cut them up. I do use Synergy as a resource tool but don't like to just pull clips to use in scouts. I need the entire game (and multiple ones) to get the "why," "where," and "when."

*Most think scouting and think opponents plays...play calls...but how good are you on the other side of the ball...are you worth a couple of points by what you pick up in terms of how teams defend?

*Individual scouting - again, less is more...what's the one thing a player does that most impacts his/her team (positively or negatively) and how can we attack that. Example: #23 is a dead 3 shooter — don't leave her to help — chase off the arc on close out.

*Know about opponents tendencies...do they trap or change defense coming out of timeout...certain plays for certain players...start the quarter with a particular play...what's their go to when they need a bucket...favorite BLOBs at key moments

*Have your "late game" scout on point...do they foul up three? What are their "advance the ball" SLOBs? What are the key subs based on situational play? What is their "come-from-behind" philosophy?

*Last one on scouting: Off-season work...I like to breakdown our conference games in the summer and review what worked and what didn't and why...I take detailed notes for the file to review when we play next season.

