

MIKE NEIGHBOR'S COACHING NOTES

OFFENSE

A coach's job is to get your 3 best players better shots than the other teams 3 best players

-High School games are won or lost on lay-ups

60% of scoring comes from 2 players, so design your offense to get these players open and to get to the foul line

- Get the ball in the paint 40x's a game

- Own the lane, don't rent it

-Get into the other teams bench with foul trouble

-Design your offense to get offensive rebounds

-You're going to miss more than 50% of your shots

- Every third pass should be a post touch

Characteristics of good offense

The best teams set the best screens and good passing creates unselfishness

-Get the ball into space vs. pressure

- One-handed players do not have enough options

Posts always have to beg for the ball because the guards will always shoot it.

Teach footwork and space the floor with great shooters

- Get leverage and balance on every catch

-You need four good shooter with an ass-kicker inside

-Have to make the time to shoot

-60% test: You need to consistently make 6 out of 10 shots from a spot to consistently shoot it in a game situation

- Pressure is good in practice because it gets you ready for game pressure

Know what you want to do but don't worry if it takes you a while to get it right

-Work for excellence, not perfection

DEFENSE

13 of the last 20 NBA champions finished in the top 5 in field goal percentage defense, and 8 of the last 9 have finished in the top 10 in both offensive and defensive field goal percentage

Defensive runs are just as important as offensive runs

Good defense starts with good offense

-Smart shot selection, spacing and the limiting of turnovers

Great defense comes from great commitment and trust

- Trust the talk, trust the coverage

90% of high school rebounding occurs below eight feet off the ground, so technique is important

- Rebounding is statistically more important than free throws

Limit easy baskets

1. Transition
2. Second shots
3. Scouting set plays
4. Limit Free Throws

Know your "No's"

1. No middle drive
2. No paint
3. No Catch and shoots for a catch and shoot player
4. No drive for drivers
5. No second shots

Be a great closeout team; don't let the ball get into the paint → The basket is the president and you are the secret service

- Eliminate penetration to limit offensive boards
- Consequences for coming into the paint
 1. Charge
 2. Steal
 3. Deflection
 4. Blocked shot
 5. Hard foul

Don't allow pattern teams to get comfortable

- Make shooters drive and drivers shoot
- Contest 60% of all shots in a game
- Make the ball go around or above you, not through you
- 40+ deflections a game = 90% winning percentage

Pressure can be used to speed up teams that don't want to run and slow down teams that want to run

- Pressing makes teams work on their press offense
- "Effectiveness isn't based on talent and skill, but on discipline and will."
- Pressure the ball, get steals off the ball

COACHING YOUR TEAM

Characteristics of good coaching

You are what you emphasize

- As the coach, you are the guardian of the team's culture
 - Build a team ego
- Leaders define reality, create hope and optimism, influence, inspire and encourage

Roy Williams was 2-19 his first year as a high school head coach

Wooden under observation for an entire season

- 2,326 distinct acts of teaching
 - 160 compliments (6.9%)
 - 153 criticisms (6.6%)
 - 2,013 teaching, instruction or correcting comments (86.5%)

Put in new sets/ Defenses/ adjustments at the beginning of practice, even before continuous shooting

- Makes them think
- Practice moves forward the entire time with no lull in intensity

Pat Riley: 4 Things players want from their coach

1. Confidence
2. Sincerity
3. Reliability
4. Trust

Jeff Van Gundy: 4 keys to be a successful coach

1. Work Ethic
2. Competency
3. Sincerity and trustworthiness
4. Reliability

Focus on the job at hand; all you can control is your program. Work hard and think positively

- Coaches can never get bored; watch your body language
- Tell them what they need to hear, not what they want to hear
- Leave something with your players other than basketball
- You find out more about yourself after losing
 - Don't beat yourself up
 - Acknowledge your mistakes and move on
 - Bad coaching is spending too much time on one thing

How to get rid of mistakes

1. Take it out of the mind
2. Visualize the correct image

Talk to yourself to help inspire yourself and build yourself up

- Have 1 or 2 statements that you tell yourself every day, focusing on the present, not the outcome

Roles

What can mess up our team this year?

Nothing is too big or too small when it comes to team chemistry

- There has to be like, respect and trust between players and coaches
- Most people aren't team players

Everyone needs to buy in on these three things

1. The coach
2. The system
3. The mission

Six ways to create buy in

1. Have knowledge of the game
2. Study and know your system
3. Catch them doing something right
4. Educate them
5. Tell the truth in a variety of ways
6. What you bring vs. what you know

Today's players: The route to their head is through their heart

- Give them answers before they ask questions

Six danger signals of the "Disease of Me"

1. Chronic feelings of under-appreciation; focusing on yourself
2. Paranoia over being cheated out of one's rightful share
3. Leadership vacuum resulting from formation of cliques and rivalries
4. Feelings of frustration even when the team performs successfully
5. Personal effort mustered to only outshine a teammate
6. Resentment of the competence of others, or the refusal to admit their contribution

Three fights in every team:

1. Division from within: Chemistry, roles, shots, playing time, etc . . .
2. Competition in front of you: Your opponent
3. Outside influences: Parents

- Every team is tired and every team has problems. Whatever team deals with these two things the best has the best chance to win.
- Make players want to come to you during tough times.

The enemy cannot be in your locker room; you can modify behavior, but you can't rehabilitate character

I can only deal with one of three things:

1. Soft
2. Stupid
3. Selfish

You have to have a good relationship with your best player; you need your best players to be your best leaders → Coaches cannot lead all the time. A player coached team is more effective than a manager coached team

- Your best players must be coachable
- You have to listen to your players
- Quiz players on coach ability? Have them rate themselves.
- When you are having trouble with a player
 1. Get other players to talk to him/her
 2. Show them tape of what they are doing wrong
 3. Bring in outside influences
- If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

Roles → Meet with all players

- Roles change; you don't know your team until the 11th game of the year
 - Sit down 2x's a year to explain roles to each other
- It's harder to find good leadership today because, although their skills are much higher, they don't identify leadership because everything is done for them
 - We're in a society where everything is almost too organized.

You can't ask players to fulfill their roles if you don't let your staff fulfill their roles

- Set up your staff like a football staff, with offensive and defensive coordinators.
- Allow assistants to run practice from time to time; sit in the bleachers and watch
- A good assistant weeds the garden
- Assistant coaches need to be all evaluation on the bench

Eliminate S's: Selfishness, stubbornness, etc . . .

Which players do you forget when you put together a practice plan? That tells you something.

- Cannot let a talented player affect your thinking

How to improve team chemistry

Respect Activity: Everyone has a piece of paper. Pass around each piece of paper and have everyone write one thing that that person does well on that paper.

What can I do to be a better teammate? Write it down on a small piece of paper. Then put the papers in a basket and read each paper aloud without naming names.

Team covenant: What we promise each other

Don't give up on guys, keep communicating

Improving your team and your program

Make everything in practice matter

- Be a champion on a daily basis
- Excuses= No result; results= No excuses
- Grow every day
- Have maximum intensity on every rep
- Tape practices, or tape players on the bench
 - Practice is the daily work; games are the test

What is your theme for the season?

- Before every practice and game, remind them of their cause

Grade our team

- Preparation (1-10)
- Team Work (1-10)
- Leadership (1-10)
- Toughness (1-10)

Evaluating a game

1. Turnover margin
2. Rebounding margin
3. Field Goal Attempts (Offense and Defense)
4. Field Goal Percentage (Offense and Defense)
5. Free Throw Attempts (Offense and Defense)
6. Free Throw Percentage (Offense and Defense)
7. No player above 13 points
8. Three point Percentage (Offense and Defense)
9. Floor game; loose balls/ charges, etc. . . .
10. Assist/ Turnover ratio

Five keys to winning on the road

1. Defend
2. Eliminate transition baskets
3. Rebound (especially on the defensive boards)
4. Toughness
5. Eliminate turnovers

Four statistics to consider

1. 50/50 plays → you need to win 70% of them
2. Keep track of the number of charges you take and how many you give up
3. Offensive rebounds (both ways)
4. Deflections

Rank players based on who is going to help us win games

Your 2nd unit won't win you a championship, but they can't keep you from winning one
- Urge the bench to make a difference, not just rest the starters

Mental Toughness

Eight traits of the ultimate athlete

1. Ability to work hard and sustain intensity
2. Competitiveness
3. Athletic Ability
4. Sacrifice for the team
5. Coping with criticism; handling success and failure
6. Clutch performance; poise and focus
7. Ability to execute game strategy
8. Passion for the sport and commitment to excellence

Four C's of mental toughness

1. Composure
2. Confident
3. Concentration
4. Commitment

Three most important mental characteristics

1. Self-discipline
2. Competitive fire
3. Self-confidence

Championship DNA

1. Culture
2. Standards
3. Success checks

4. Core

Emotional arousal: How you “feel” at moments of competitiveness

- Must find the best place and work to maintain optimal emotional arousal
- Teach players how to react to mistakes. Great athletes are great because they react to mistakes well.

Being a better person

Create a brand

Love, respect and appreciate

Within 30 seconds of a conversation, say something to encourage or compliment someone

- Be personal and sincere, but not flattering

Three things Jesus did on Earth

1. He listened
2. He cared
3. He confronted

Be a servant friend

Call one person a day

There are two types of people: Energy givers and energy drainers

Ask for what you need, not what you want

Don't let what you can't do determine what you can't do

The truth; live it, tell it, and take it.

The true measure of a culture is what your players say when you are not around

SPRING 2020

Have they had enough opportunities in practice to correct their mistakes and be confident in games?

Individualize your plans

Prioritize your plans

Let them play

“Functionally Fast”

- Have to zig while other people zag
- What is our identity?

You lose the race 2x's in a row, you're either disengaged or you are tired and you need to come out

- Attack every single play; want to get a shot up in :10 or less

Give the ball energy; don't stall the ball

Simplify to play fast/ make simple reads

“You are what you count”

“Eliminate losing first”

Marginal gains → Get 1% better on many things

Structure things to players strengths, let them be me

Win convincingly on either turnovers or rebounds

Emphasize the pace; putting pressure on defense

Force your opponent to change their game plan to what you’re doing

Only talk on dead balls; don’t want the players to lose focus

Best shooters have to get the most shots

-Are we getting the right shots for the right people?

“Bright spot Coaching”: Work on their strengths 3x’s as much as their weaknesses

-Find three things that they are great at, have one thing to work on

Practices have to mirror your expectations

Not athletic?

-Anticipate

-Watch film

-Play smarter

-Understand angles

-Give them tangible things to change

-Make it okay to understand that they will have weaknesses

Developing reads:

1. Passer starts unguarded so they can see the floor
2. If they are having difficulty, strip the difficulty
 - a. Increase difficulty as mastery progresses
3. No delay in feedback; has to be immediate → kids crave it!
 - a. Phone/ iPad
4. If they master it, get to the back of the line. If they need more reps, go to the front of the line

Record boards in locker room

-Force kids to have evidence of everything

Talk and listen to your players

-Be vulnerable; it’s okay to say “I don’t know”

-Be supportive when they are struggling

-Women have to feel good about themselves to play well

Celebrate victories and good times along the way; don’t miss those opportunities!

Don’t let other people define your definition of success

Quality shots for our best shooters in their best scoring zones

OFFENSIVE SERIES 1) Transition 2) Race and space 3) Flow 4) Action 5) Family of sets 6) Offensive Rebounding

QUALITY SHOTS

Time/Score
Made in practice
Was it the "best shot"?

BEST SHOOTERS

Green Light license
Practice earned
Game maintained

SCORINGS ZONES

Paint
Free Throw line
Beyond the arc

Live with some bad shots rather than live ball turnovers

MIKE NEIGHBORS-SKILL DEVELOPMENT

“Simple can be harder than complex. You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple. But it’s worth it in the end because once you get there you can move mountains.”

-Steve Jobs

“Stats are like bikini’s; they show you some things but not everything.”

“A person who won’t read has no advantage over the person who can’t read.”

-Mark Twain

Step by step process of developing a skill development plan

1. Identify and state the end objective for each individual
2. Determine manageable and measurable criteria for determining success
3. Set a sequence of steps necessary to reach the objective
4. Determine tactics and situations that will motivate each individual to reach the objective
5. Get to practice

Random Thoughts on Skill Development

1. Spend 80% of our time on the most important 20%
2. Activity is often mistaken for productivity
3. Drill for mastery
4. Try to have a 5 to 1 practice to play ratio
5. In your feeder program; don’t keep score in the traditional manner until they can pass, dribble and shoot
6. Make sure that you are visible to all players at all levels

STEP 1: ALWAYS BE CREDIBLE

Research tells us that your players decide in the first two minutes of their very first workout if they trust you or if they think you are like every other coach that they have had.

*Your first workout with a player should be 1 on 1

- It allows you to make that player your personal objective
- It allows them to make mistakes without peer pressure

*Open the gym

- If you want them to get better you have to give them the opportunity

*Name things after players they know

- Griffin, LeBron, Curry, etc ...

*Work on their strengths

- Research has show our greatest capacity for improvement comes in areas we already possess a high level of skills in

*It's a medical fact the brain slows in function as fatigue sets in

- Plan your workouts to coincide with fatigue. Don't introduce new ideas when they are fatigued

*Consistent language

- Don't call it the short corner one day then soft spot the next

*Defensive improvement is just as important as offensive improvement

- Will give certain players a faster path towards playing time

*Reality World

- Don't give unwarranted praise or unearned criticism. Shout praise, whisper criticism

STEP 2: ALWAYS BE CHALLENGING

_____ *Create desirable difficulty

- You can do this with intensity of the work. You can do this by placing a time/score on the work, you can use props or other distractions. You can do this by illustrating a plan for them on a daily basis!

*Do things correctly twice for every time it's done correctly

- The brain actually remembers something that you did wrong 4x's but only correctly once even though they did it correctly the last time

*As players succeed, add complexity; as they struggle, reduce it

- Resist the urge to keep pushing and pushing

*Players need to feel worked out after a workout

- Your plan and your tactics have to leave them pushed when they are walking off the court. We all want to feel like our time is/was valuable. If your players don't leave a workout tired but wanting more than your plan isn't good enough

*Feedback must be speedy

- Research shows that to be ultimately effective it must be almost immediate, especially if you can do it visually
- Don't begin the feedback with "don't"

*Feedback during a game is different than feedback during skill development

- In practice you can expand that explanation to teach

STEP 3: ALWAYS BE CONFIDENT

You must ooze confidence when you are working on skill development. To be confident you must be convicted in your plan, your methods, and your execution. Confidence takes weeks, months, years to develop and one second to lose

*Basketball Development requires two types of skills

- **PRECISION SKILLS:** Skills that require technique, form and repetition; shooting, passing, catching, dribbling, etc . . . Emphasis is on zero errors, no variation and a lot of correction
- **DECISION SKILLS:** Skills that require reading, recognizing and reacting; shot selection/ pass/shoot decisions, reading screens/ defenses, etc . . . We expect errors and learn from them, with a lot of variation, with little correction but a lot of coaching

*Failure is NOT a lack of skill

STEP 4: ALWAYS BE CREATIVE

Using a drill that your players haven't seen before is the same thing as making it up. You don't have to tell the players where it came from. Always give credit where credit is due, but it's okay to let your players believe that you are a genius!

*GAMES

- Make your drills into games. Games create a competitive environment for your workouts.

*Bring on the beats

- Players love music
- Use it to stop and start drills in some shooting drills

*Shrink your space

- Play games on one side of the court with your perimeters. Play on shortened courts to exaggerate transition defense.

*Take them to watch someone they idolize

STEP 5: ALWAYS BE CHARTING

From charting you can see progress/regress. Patterns will develop. Highs, lows and plateaus. Consistency and one hit wonders will separate themselves. But if you aren't charting, all you are doing is giving them an opinion.

POST PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Keys to Post Play (In order of importance)

1. Play: Remember why you are in the game
2. Possession: You want the ball (rebound, post-up, loose and tipped balls)
3. Position: Be in the right spots at the right time/ get open and stay open
4. Physicality: Be punishing and cause dread in those play against you
5. Presentation: Look the part

PLAY

6 Things that you need to ask your post players to do on offense

1. Establish Tempo: Run the floor hard!
2. Score Easy: Have a small repertoire of undefendable moves
3. Draw Fouls: Get easy points and put opponents at a disadvantage late in games
4. Rebound: No one has ever been too good at rebounding
5. Be Punishing: Mentally fear and wear down the opponent
6. Screen Well: Be a great teammate by getting teammates open

5 Things that you need to ask your post players to do on defense

1. Protect the Post: Fight for space and wall up
2. Effect Shots: Make players score over us not around us
3. Rebound: Every. Single. Play.
4. Defend Screens: Technique must be flawless
5. Talk: Your voice is the anchor of the team

All post players need to learn how to play with and without angles

- Working with each player to determine their arsenal of moves is an important part of your job as a skill developer.
- We have a rule that if you attempt a shot in a game that we don't work on in practice, that it is a bad shot for our team.

POSSESSION

Possession usually goes to the person who goes after the ball stronger. A post player who can go get the ball is valuable to any team playing any style.

POSITION

Be in the right spot at the right time

PHYSICALITY

*Run the floor in both directions

- 100% based on effort and concentration
- We will control their minutes based on whether or not they run the floor
 - Poor post players HATE to do this; GREAT post players love to do this

*Crash the boards every time

- Be that person the other team is spending time on in walk through to talk about your effort

*Hit cutters (legally) every chance you get

- If you can get near half without being in the bonus or in foul trouble maybe even once to send a message

*Screen offense and defense

- Make legal contact every time

*Effect every shot around the basket without fouling

- Nothing is more frustrating to finesse post players than to be bodied by a physical post player

PRESENTATION

In every drill we do with post players, if we don't have a good presentation, we teach our passers not to feed them the ball. It's amazing how quickly players will do it right if they never get to shoot at the end of a long, hard drill.

*Run the court

- Easy to see on film whether they have chosen to do this

*Post when the ball can find you

- If the ball is in position to find us, are we posting for it?

*On Defense

- Do we have chin on shoulder?
- Do we hit cutters?
- Do we talk on defense?
- Do we sprint the floor?

PERIMETER PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Keys to Perimeter Play (In order of importance)

1. Play: Remember why you are in the game
2. Possession: You want the ball (rebound, post-up, loose and tipped balls)
3. Position: Be in the right spots at the right time/ get open and stay open
4. Psychology: Play smart and tough at all times
5. Presentation: Look the part

PLAY

4 Things that you need to ask your perimeter players to do on offense

1. Have a transition game
2. Have an arc game
3. Have a paint game
4. Think the game

4 Things that you need to ask your perimeter players to do on defense

1. Talk in transition
2. Guard their yard
3. Rebound
4. Think the game

*Guards have to either play with or without space

*Additional thoughts on perimeter play

- Have a paint game, either with the dribble or with the pass
- Be great at something, then be good at everything else
- Think and talk, two things most of today's youth struggle to do
- Game shots, game spots, at game speed all the time
- Have a move and a counter move from the following spots on the floor
 - The arc
 - Off a screen
 - Off a ball screen
 - At the rim
 - At the free throw line

RAZORBACKS®

ANATOMY OF OUR OFFENSE

10 Word Standard

Quality shot by our best scorers in best scoring zones

Strategies

- * Identify quality shots
- * Identify best scorers
- * Identify best scoring zones

Indicators

- * FG%
- * FT Rate
- * TO Rate

Quality Shots

- * Time/Score
- * Made in practice
- * Was it "best" shot

Best Scorers

- * Green Light License
- * Practice Earned
- * Game Maintained

Scoring Zones

- * In the Paint
- * At the FT Line
- * Beyond the Arc

FG %: (40/35/75)

FT Rate: (Top 10)

TO Rate: (Top 5)

TACTICS

Transition → Race/Space → Flow → Family → Action → Rebound

Our offense will be *Functionally Fast*. We will play at the fastest tempo under which we can function without committing turnovers. We will value spacing and execution. We will have four versatile perimeter players on the floor at all times with an interior player who can rim run to establish our transition attack. Rabbits will rim run, Rackers will push with the ball, Locks will sprint the floor to deep corners, Dragons will trail the action then initiate our FLOW. Our Race/Space will take up the first seven seconds of the shot clock. The next 2-3 seconds will make the defense wrong with FLOW reads. The next 1-3 seconds will be an action created by the reads. This will leave us 8-10 seconds of the possession to call one of our FAMILY of set plays to create a great shot. We will then rebound with 3 and a half players to get 2nd chance opportunities.

We will *Make Defenses Wrong* regardless of how they prepare to defend us.

We will be able to score against top competition at home or on the road.

We will use analytics to provide information to help us trust our gut.

We will be efficient in time/score special situations.

We will utilize 3 for 2 and 2 for 1 opportunities.

• We will have an identity anyone can see.

We will be "fun" to watch.

We will WIN with it.



RAZORBACKS®

Does our offense allow us to beat the best teams we could possibly ever play



Does our offense allow our players to make any defensive scheme wrong



Does our offense allow our best players to get the best shots in their best scoring zones



LANGUAGE

- * Simple
- * Intentional
- * Consistent

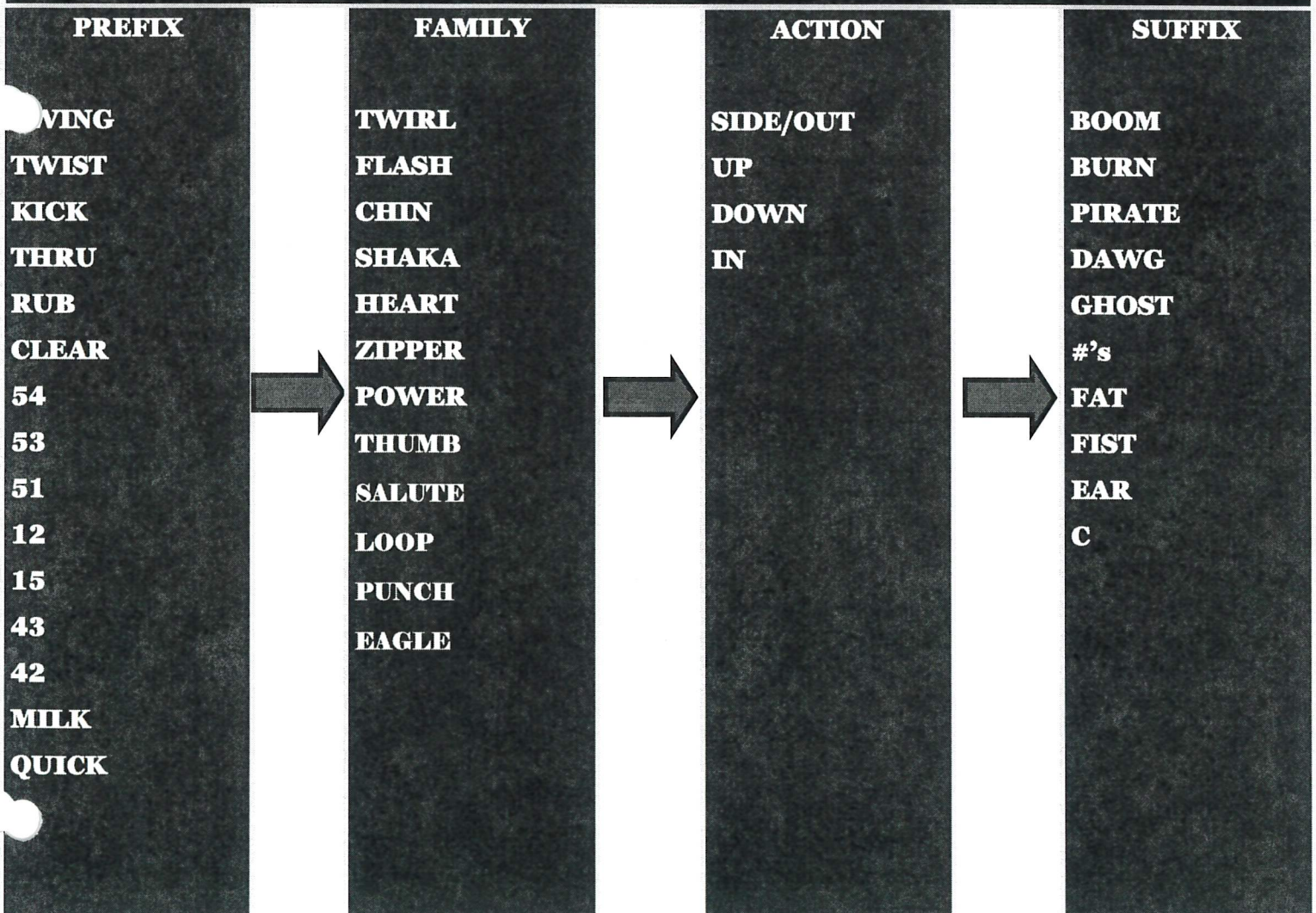
STANDARDS

- * Rack It
- * Running Rabbit
- * Locked 3

STAY AND PLAY

- * Win Race
- * Think in Bets
- * Value Line-Up

Simple, Intentional, Consistent LANGUAGE
few syllabled, speaks in images, verbals/nons



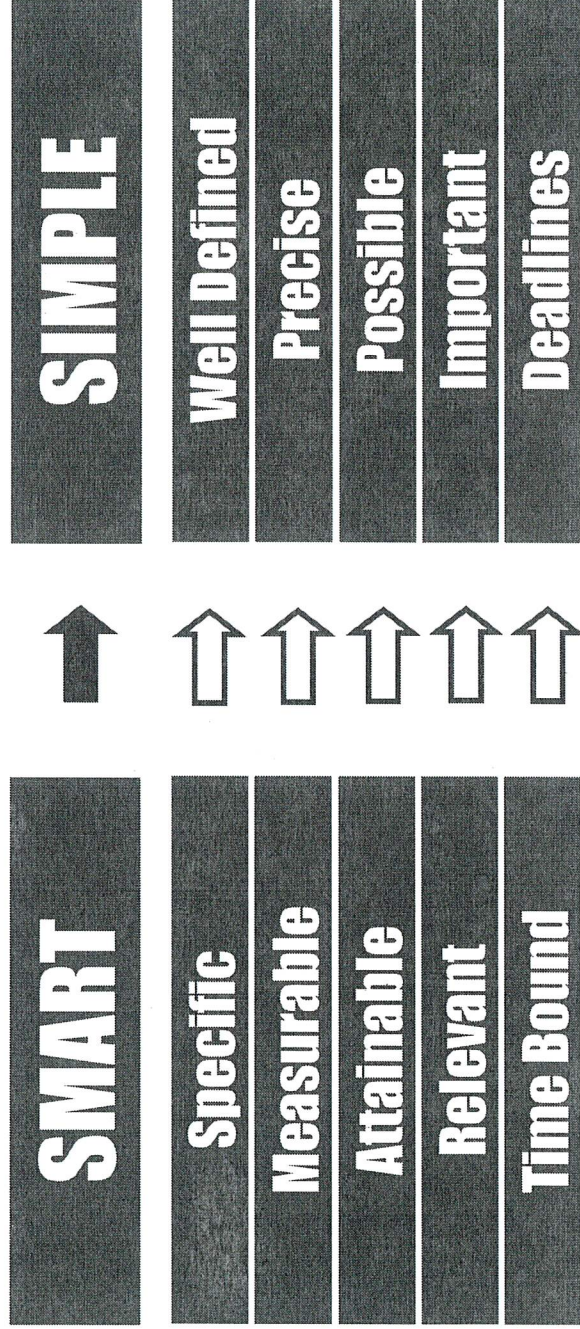
EVIDENCE OF EXCELLENCE



I am a child of the 80s. A Gen Xer. I was in the theater when Star Wars, Back to the Future, and Top Gun premiered. I made mix tapes with a dual cassette player dubbing the newest hair ballad alongside the latest Chicago song. The same three movies I saw in the theater would soon be released on the newest format of VHS. I was in front of 900lb, 28 inch TV cabinet when MTV launched and only played music videos. Was there in Chris Berman launched a 24 hour sports channel that my parents assured me would never "catch on".....

That also means I grew up believing that setting GOALS was the key to my future success. Teachers and Coaches alike, mentored me and my teammates that without goals in our life, none of us would ever succeed. I had all the cool quotes to remind me daily. "Dreams Don't Come True... Goals Do"; "Don't Decrease the Goal, Increase the Effort"; "Goals are dreams we convert to plans and set to action to Fulfill." I had them every where!!!

I knew the requirements of setting good goals from the SMART/SIMPLE method:



ARKANSAS®



EVIDENCE OF EXCELLENCE



I used those guidelines in the classroom, on the basketball court, on the baseball diamond... you name it, I was a goal guy!!
Until 2014.

My second season as the Head Coach at the University of Washington, goal setting was a part of our very culture. We were returning a strong team off of a deep WNIT run. Expectations were high. Leaders were in place. On "Goal Setting Day", we crushed it! We followed Goal Setting 101 to the letter of the law and emerged from our team room with "**NCAA Bound**" as our season motto. Washington had not been to the Big Dance for eight consecutive seasons and this group of Huskies was determined to change that.

With smaller incremental goals of "x" wins in the non-conference, beating certain rival schools, and finishing in the top half of the difficult Pac 12, we embarked on our season. We had NCAA logos plastered everywhere around the locker room. NCAA brackets were on our scouting reports. We had posters printed and t-shirts made. You name it, anywhere we could put a reminder of our goals, we did.

The season was a success. Checking off goal after goal, we sat in a room on Selection Monday waiting to find out if our ultimate goal of making the NCAA Tournament was to be reached. Bracket by bracket the field was being revealed on ESPN. Anticipation grew and grew as each of the first three regions were unveiled on national tv. With only one region remaining, the announcement finally came. The Washington Huskies had reached their final goal... We were going to the NCAA Tournament!! The celebration was on...

Guess what happened next?

We didn't play well again. We didn't practice well. We didn't travel to the tournament well. We didn't shoot around well. We didn't pre-game meal well. BUT, because we had reached our ultimate goal none of us could really identify that until it was too late.

The season ended with us being upset by the #11 seed Miami Hurricane.

But judging by the return flight home, no one really seemed to care. It took every ounce of my fiber not to explode when there were high fives and celebrations and pictures being snapped of everything and people posting on social media..... Instead I sat there quietly because it dawned on me, it was all my fault. They were simply doing what people do as they achieve their goals. It was my fault for not knowing then what I know now.

It was the longest 6 hour flight of my life.

It was then and there I vowed to never let it happen again.

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EVIDENCE OF EXCELLENCE



Enter Joshua Medcalf and Jamie Gilbert. They had just published their book *BURN YOUR GOALS: The Counter Culture Approach to Achieving your Greatest Potential*.

I read it cover to cover in one sitting and took copious notes as every single page had something that hit me square in the face. In the 244 pages these two authors had dissected exactly why I felt like we had never been rewarded from our outstanding goal setting. They illustrated why our best team in years, while although reaching our goals, had underachieved.

By setting goals, I/we had been limiting ourselves. Even if our goal had been stretched to the limit to begin with, we were limiting it in some form. Find the book. Read the book. Challenge yourself with the book.

Fast forward to Goal Setting Day for the 2016 season. Same team room. Virtually the same roster. Same game plan going in.

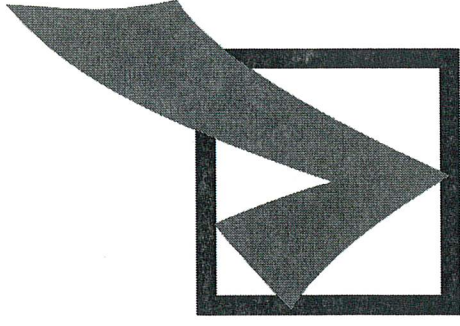
This team was once again laser focused on leaving a legacy at Washington by setting amazing goals that would get us there. We increased our number of non-con wins. We decreased our desired defensive FG%. We made all kinds of minor improvements over the previous season. Then came the magic. Led by a group of upper classmen who had experienced the NCAA upset the year before, the discussion was about winning games in the NCAA Tournament rather than just going. Some said winning one game would be a great goal. Some argued two games was the better goal. After over an hour of heated discussion, the team emerged with Sweet Sixteen as their ultimate goal for the season.

It was perfect. It checked every box of Goal Setting 101 class.

I wasn't going to make the same mistake twice. We burned them. Well, I tore them into pieces and threw at the team as I really didn't want to answer questions about our fire safety. But we made our point.

Goals were gone. Goals were no longer a part of our culture.

This was the birth of our **Evidence of Excellence**.



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EVIDENCE OF EXCELLENCE



We has a staff had agreed that by setting a series of standards together with players and working together to hold each other accountable to them, we would no longer be focused on results that accompany goal setting. We knew that once we had reached the goal of making the NCAA Tournament the previous year our team felt like their season was done. In focusing on the standards we could judge our daily efforts versus stated points of emphasis and allow the results to follow on that basis.

We brainstormed areas that we valued within our program on and off the court.

We asked our players to do the same.

Together, we concluded there were 28 areas of being a student/athlete that we needed standards for:

Classroom, Training Room, Tutoring, Training Table, On the Bus, On the Plane, In the Hotel, Recruiting Visits, On the Bench, In the Locker Room, Ipads, In Practice, Summer Workouts, In the Weight Room, Compliance, Community Service, Alcohol, Banned Substances, Sleep/Recovery, Team Meals, Pre-Game, Post Game, Truth, Appreciation of Others, Social Media, Emotional Management, Personal Budget, Communication

For each of these Standards, we came up with specific behaviors that we would hold each other accountable for upholding. As coaches we helped the team to understand there are various levels of behaviors that will ultimately be used by others to determine how their years with us would be remembered. Using some of the Above the Line items from Urban Meyer, we set out to create our list. (more explanation on the next 2 pages)

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STANDARD

LEAVE A LEGACY

BE REMEMBERED

EARN A LETTER

BE FORGOTTEN

BE GONE

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LEAVE A LEGACY

The highest standard a player can strive for. This is a player who on and off the court best exemplifies what it means to be student/athlete in all areas. They not only do things themselves but they help others along the way. They make everyone around them better versions of themselves. They are inspired rather than motivated. These are the players who will be pictured on banners for years after graduation. They will be invited back for reunions. All future players will hear stories of their impact on the school, the program, the city, and their state. They will be in your Hall of Fame.

BE REMEMBERED

This type is just a step below because there are certain areas in which they don't excel. Maybe they have some lapses of judgement in some instances. Perhaps an occasional lack of helping another and just taking care of themselves. Nonetheless this is a valued member who has made significant impact. This is a player that comes to mind when something reminds you. You remember them fondly but probably don't use them as an example very often.

EARN A LETTER

The last positive type is that player who does the bare minimum to stay in your good graces. They may not be a distraction in any shape or form but they simply don't add to your team. They will get their letter jacket and move on with their life after graduation. They might or might not come back to a reunion even if invited.



BE FORGOTTEN

The first negative (below the line) type is a player you tend to forget about when you are making teams and later in your career when you are trying to recall faces in a team picture. Many of the standards are not met. Good chance they have even caused a teammate to slip below the line from time to time.

BE GONE

The last straw. The third strike. Whatever you want to call it, these are the actions that result in a player no longer being part of your program. Egregious acts. Repeated acts. This is probably where many of your Zero Tolerance actions fall. I tell our players these are the decisions that have already been made for them.

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With these 28 guiding standards we started practice. Each day we confronted any behavior that was counter to what our players had set as their Leave a Legacy standard. We pointed out every small detail in any area. Nothing was too small to confront.

The pre-season and conference season flew by.

Selection Monday. This year the Washington Huskies were revealed in the very first bracket as the 7 seed in the College Park region. First round opponent would be Penn. The Ivy League Champions were riding a 24 game winning streak.

The celebration this year was much different than the previous year. Penn had our What's Next focus.

Using our standards we flew across the country to College Park, Maryland. The plane ride was Legacy Leaving. The hotel was Legacy Leaving. The pre-game meal was Legacy Leaving. We were on point. Result... Washington 65, Penn 63

What's Next? The #2 seeded Maryland Terrapins on their home floor.

Another two days of nothing but Legacy Leaving behaviors... Result... Washington 74, Maryland 65

The Washington Huskies were headed to the Sweet 16.

Remember back to Goal Setting Day? The Sweet 16 had been their stated team goal.

We were about to find out if our Evidence of Excellence would carry us beyond where our goals would have taken us!!

Up Next were the Kentucky Wildcats who would be playing in Rupp Arena, sleeping in their own beds, and have 8,000 Big Blue Nation fans.

Once again we had Legacy Leaving travel, preparation, and focus. Any distraction that tried to creep in was met head-on by the players themselves. I don't remember a single occasion in which a Coach had to step in during the entire trip.

Result... Washington 85, Kentucky 72.

I distinctly remember sitting in the locker room 100% certain this would not have been happening had we stuck to our Goal Setting. We would have fallen to the same mentality from the past. Instead, there was very little celebration. Just a sense of going back out and watching the next game to see who our opponent would be in the Elite 8.

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Evidence of Excellence had proven to be a success for us. It would ultimately carry us to a win over Stanford to earn a trip to the 2016 Final Four. And even though that would be our last victory of the season, we were convinced the historic year would have never happened if we hadn't changed our way of thinking.

I am not about to sit here and type that Goal Setting has no value. It obviously does, and am sure there are storied just like ours but with GOALS as the reason for the success. I simply want to challenge you to consider the circumstances your current program is in.

I would say this might not be the best course of action for a first year team. It will challenge teams trying to deal with change. But once you have established TRUST with your team, I do think the hard times are worth it.

We didn't introduce it here at Arkansas until our second season. Although we were working with the framework, we didn't have it fully implemented until year 2. You decide what's best for you and your team.

We are sharing this in today's Newsletter release because we are in the midst of setting these standards for our 2020 season. With a room full of upper classmen, the early returns are showing a very high standard of behavior to this point.

I'll keep you posted on how it finishes up.

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