

My Coaching Philosophy

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Objectives/role of sport

The roles and objectives of sport are numerous and widely varied. I believe these roles and objectives play a significant part in the lives of athletes, parents, spectators, officials, and coaches in American society today. To state my philosophy concerning these objectives and goals I have condensed the list to what I feel are the six most important objectives: fun, fitness, education, sense of community, business, and the entertainment of spectators. Each of these objectives is important for a coach to consider when deciding how to coach his/her team.

The “fun” aspect of sport is most certainly the reason that most people decide to participate in and continue to participate in various sports. Many people enjoy the challenge of competition and the strategy involved in vanquishing the opponents and achieving success through victory. Ultimately, if sports were not fun, no one would voluntarily participate in them. Sports are fun for athletes, coaches, spectators, and officials. The “fun” role of sports is probably the single greatest reason that we have sports in this country and the reason why sports are so important for many Americans. Each year, more people tune in to watch the Super Bowl than any other television event. It is clear that when sports beat out the President’s “State of the Union” address in ratings, they must be fun, or Americans would not watch them. ESPN is one of the most successful cable channels in the world; this would not be the case if Americans did not love watching sports.

The city of Navato, California Youth Sports Department believes that fun is clearly one of the most important parts of sports. This group's philosophy states that they want athletes to be able to participate in a "fun environment (City of Navato, 2008)."

This city is similar to many others across the United States in the fact that they make fun a top priority for their youth sports programs. Starting from the little league and going all the way up through the big leagues, sports exist because people consider them to be fun.

Although the fun aspect of sports is beneficial to one's personal happiness the role of fitness in sports is valuable to one's personal health/wellness. Through participating in sports, athletes become more physically fit. Although not every athlete is in peak physical condition, athletes are in better health than non-athletes. It has been stated countless times that consistent exercise in collaboration with healthy eating habits will increase a person's life expectancy. Although sports participation is not the only contributing factor to a person's health, it does play a positive role in overall wellness and good health.

Athletes' fitness and health are affected positively by both cardiovascular exercises and weight training. I have seen the positive effects of sports in health/wellness in my own life. Since starting an exercise/fitness routine nearly two years ago, I have lost roughly twenty-five pounds and have greatly increased my strength and endurance. The role that fitness plays in sports is one that has life-long positive effects and can help make for a better life. Most people who are in good health also report to be happier than their

less active counterparts. By educating people about the positive role that fitness in sports can play, perhaps more people will choose to participate in athletics.

Education plays an instrumental role in sports. Education through sports can often help teach important life lessons such as perseverance, teamwork, leadership, and a strong work ethic. Education in and through sports is not just an athlete learning the rules and strategies for their sport; it consists of all lessons that can be learned simply by participating in sports. The educational role that sports plays is often one of the more prominent roles emphasized in youth sports. A colleague of mine, the associate varsity head football coach at our high school, explains: “I try to instill values into kids that they will use in the game and will also carry over into life (Kolbe, interview).” Clearly this coach is one who places great value into the educational role that sports plays. In emphasizing education through sports this coach has an excellent sense of the important role that athletics play in the community.

The role that community plays in athletics is evident from little league through the professional ranks. People from various towns, cities, states, and even nations often affiliate themselves with their local sports teams. A successful sports team can permeate positive feelings throughout an entire community; however, an unsuccessful team can also bring feelings of shame to an area. People in communities often take ownership of their athletic teams by volunteering to help the team or supporting the team both financially and through participation (attendance at games and pep rallies). Because of

the great influence that athletics has on community, millions of dollars can be raised through the business role of sports.

The role of business in sports is seen by the sheer magnitude of advertising and sponsorships that are affiliated with athletics. As I mentioned earlier, the Super Bowl is the most watched television event in the United States. The cost of one advertisement can be valued in the millions of dollars. Also, corporations such as Nike, Adidas, Reebok, Under Armour, etc. all vie for the rights to outfit athletic teams. By having its corporate logo attached to certain athletes or teams, the company is often able to significantly increase their profits. A shoe company stands to make millions, perhaps billions, of dollars by having LeBron James or Kobe Bryant wear their brand of shoes/apparel. People who consider James and Bryant to be role models often try to emulate them by purchasing their merchandise. The role of business in sports continues to expand as the entertainment value of sports continues to increase.

The role of entertainment in sports ties very closely with the business aspect of sports. The University of Michigan's football stadium can hold over 113,000 people and sells out every football game. Not only does Michigan entertain guests in person at Michigan Stadium they also entertain thousands of viewers each week on television. This is a trend that is shared by dozens of college football programs throughout the country. Thousands of people every year attend basketball, baseball, hockey, football, etc. games throughout the country. ESPN, the worldwide leader in sports television,

boasts five channels devoted completely to sports. Sports are not a pastime any more in American sports; they are a passion for millions.

Objectives at different levels

The six main objectives of sports all have different levels of importance at different levels of competition. A role of sports that is most important at the youth level may have very little importance in professional sports. All six objectives play a role in sports; however, this does not mean that all of these objectives should be stressed or emphasized at all levels.

At the youth and high school levels, the most important objective I feel is fun. If athletic participation is not fun for our youth, then they will have less incentive to continue playing as they grow older. Sports are meant to be fun, and at the youth and high school levels, fun should be the focus. In addition, when we teach children sports, we are teaching them something they can enjoy for a lifetime.

At the college and professional level, fun for the players is not of great importance. Because of the skill level of these players, they do not have to experience as much fun to continue playing the sport. Other incentives such as college scholarships and the opportunity to make money, help drive players to continue their playing careers.

Similarly, the role of fitness is of great importance at the youth and high school levels and of less importance at the collegiate and professional levels. Athletes in youth and high school sports often learn to become more physically fit through their participation in sports and are more likely to continue that habit the longer they stay in

sports. Conversely, athletes at higher levels have already achieved a high level of fitness, which has enabled them to reach such high levels in their sport. Athletes at the highest level are very educated in the benefits of physical fitness and are repeating its benefits. Fitness is still important at the more expert levels for athletes to continue at their high levels of performance, but this element takes care of itself because of the nature of their profession.

The role of education in athletics is of great value to youth and high school participants. Sports help teach our children life lessons that they may not learn otherwise. Sports teach many important values: fair play, competitiveness, sportsmanship, and how to handle success and failure. Using sports as an educational tool for our children serves a valuable purpose in youth and high school sports. The role of education in athletics at the collegiate and professional levels serves a minor purpose. Athletes at these levels are adults and often do not wish to continue education through sports. Although an athlete may be interested in how to better learn a technique that helps them on the playing surface, they would be less apt to be receptive to learning “life lessons” through sports. As most people grow older, they seek less and less education. Although the role of education can be of great value to all levels of competitors, it appears to be emphasized most at the youngest levels of sport.

The role that community plays in sports, I believe, transcends age and ability levels. Athletes at the most basic levels and the highest levels of expertise still play prominent roles in their communities. Within elementary school physical education,

competition may exist between classrooms. This sense of community is seen as different classrooms pledge allegiance to their faction. The same is true in college and professional sports. Students at Michigan State University and the University of Michigan feel a sense of pride in their respective communities each year before the annual football game. The winning team also gives their community a great sense of pride. This sense of pride has inspired Boston Celtics fans to chant “BEAT L.A.!” while playing the Los Angeles Lakers, a team that is nearly three thousand miles away. Rivalries can exist between cross-town teams or cross-hemisphere teams, in the case of the Olympics. The role that community plays in sports can be seen across all different levels.

The business aspect of sports focuses far more on the collegiate and professional ranks and very little on the youth and high school levels. Millions of dollars of revenue are raised each year in advertising for intercollegiate and professional sports. Nearly every team at these levels can boast at least one company that claims to be “the official _____ provider of (insert team name here).” Companies love to have their product affiliated with sports, especially athletes and teams that are most successful. This is still true at the youth and high school level for sponsorships. A local pizza restaurant might sponsor a little league team in order to have their business be seen in a positive way within the community. Local businesses may donate money to high school teams in an effort to entice community members to buy products/goods/services from

their businesses. Although the role of business in sports is seen at all levels, it is a far more (potentially) lucrative financial venture to invest in college and professional sports.

Similarly to business, the role of entertainment is seen at all levels of athletics. From youth leagues through professional sports, almost everywhere a game/scrimmage/match/meet is taking place, you will find spectators. At youth and high school levels this number may be as low as the single digits, but as the levels of athletic ability increase, you see more spectators in the stands. College and professional sports can draw thousands of spectators to watch contests in person. Along with the thousands watching the game live, many of these games are broadcasted over television and radio networks to thousands or even millions of people who are watching/listening to the game outside of the athletic arena. Each year millions of fans pack stadiums, sports bars, and homes to watch sports.

Definition of Success/Role of Winning

My definition of coaching success is simple and direct. I have been a successful coach when players leave my program as better people than when they came. I define my success by players who learn not only basketball skills, but life skills as well. If I have a player who is better able to hold his/her temper, or a player who gains leadership abilities, I would deem that as successful coaching. Regardless of whether or not a player is the star of the team or the last player on the bench, I feel that all players in my program

have the opportunity to be successful, and it is my responsibility to help guide them to those levels.

One of the most rewarding things for me as a coach is when former players come back and visit with me. I have coached eighth grade boys' basketball ("A" team) each of the past two seasons, and I know I have been a successful coach when these former players come back to see me. Sabock states "The ultimate in satisfaction, for a coach who cares, occurs years after an athlete has left high school and has become successful in whatever field he or she has chosen to pursue. Long after the games have been played, this is what really counts. This is the time when a coach is permitted the luxury of thinking that the experiences someone had as a member of a particular team might have helped that person become what he or she is as an adult, and as a citizen of a community (Sabock, page 87)." It is my hope to have this type of impact on my players. If I am able to achieve this with even one student, I deem that as success.

Watching my students compete at the high school level is rewarding, as I am able to witness their growth. One of my more passive student-athletes at the eighth grade level was one of the more vocal leaders on the junior varsity summer team this year. Watching that young man mature into a more physically and mentally tough individual was a coaching success for me. For me, seeing the growth in the athletes who I have coached, is the most rewarding experience of coaching.

Another coaching success I have had in my limited coaching career occurred recently. A player who cared very little about his academics came to talk to me last week

about how he is committed to doing better in the classroom this year. After our conversation, I could see that he now realizes the importance of education in his life. For two years I coached this student-athlete as an eighth and ninth grade basketball player, and I had to discipline him more than once for his lack of effort in the classroom.

Whether or not this player will sustain his new commitment to education or whether or not he goes back to his old habits remains to be seen. If I, in some small way, have been able to help this student become more committed to academics, I consider that to be far more successful than any coaching win I have ever had.

Michigan State University head basketball coach Tom Izzo has said for years that his favorite part of his job is the players who come back to visit. He said he loves to have players come back and hear all their success stories. Izzo feels that his players' time in East Lansing is helpful in molding them into the successful men they become even after their playing careers are finished. Although most coaches will not ever have the amount of success that Izzo has had, every coach can strive to achieve the level of influence Izzo has with his players.

One of my colleagues, Brad Hansen, a former high school basketball coach differs in the definition of successful coaches as opposed to effective coaches. His coaching philosophy is, "I would rather be an effective coach than a successful coach. A successful coach wins and wins at all costs, i.e.- John Calipari. An effective coach wins and in doing so wins the right way (Hansen, interview)." This colleague brings up an interesting point. Are coaches viewed as successful simply based upon their win/loss

record or are they successful based upon the impact they have on the lives of their players? Based upon Coach Hansen's definitions of successful and effective, I would much rather be an effective coach.

Hansen's philosophy places an emphasis on doing things the "right way." Coach Hansen mentions University of Kentucky head basketball coach John Calipari as someone who is a successful coach but not an effective coach. Calipari is a coach who is often viewed as someone who bends rules and takes shortcuts to be "successful." I agree with Hansen that someone can be an effective coach and still win by doing things the right way. Success is defined in many ways, and I believe it is dangerous for coaches to think their success is directly tied to their win/loss record. Popular public opinion tends to define success by numbering victories and defeats, but effective coaches can still be "successful" without winning a championship. Success is in the eye of the beholder.

Winning, although it is what all teams strive to do in the athletic arena, is not the main goal of sports, at least not at the youth and high school levels. The main goal of high school sports is to make productive citizens out of young men and women. All athletic teams strive to win, although winning at all costs completely ignores other important roles that sports must play.

When I apply for my first varsity head coaching position as a boys' basketball coach, I will have one question for my interviewers before we even start the interview. I will tell them that if the criteria I will be graded on as a coach is the statistics of my team's wins and losses, then I do not want the job. If my performance as a coach will be

judged on how well I teach boys to become productive young men, then I will be most interested in the job. I will also enlighten the interviewers about my philosophy: by making productive young men from boys, I feel that the team will win basketball games in the process; but to me winning is neither the ultimate nor the most important goal. Having a significant impact on the lives of young people and teaching those young people how to be productive members of the community is MY goal as a coach. This is my perception of the role of winning in athletics.

Gender Equity

Based upon my life growing up I have very strong opinions on gender equity in athletics. My mother was not given many choices in the sports that she could play as a high school girl before Title IX was enacted. My mother went to Flint Central High School in the late sixties and early seventies. Sports available at that time for girls were cheerleading and synchronized swimming, far fewer than the opportunities afforded to boys. In order to be involved in athletics my mom became a timer for the boys' swimming team. In today's society because of Title IX, women are afforded the same types of opportunity as men.

We, as coaches, need to ensure that our young women of today have ample opportunities to compete in sports. I feel that women's participation in athletics from youth to high school is very important. It is important to give our young girls and

women equal opportunities. The benefits of athletic competition were denied to girls in this country up until the last forty years. Women do not only need to be offered the ability to participate in sports, they also need the opportunities that go along with athletics.

Women's sports are not afforded the same publicity as men's sports. Attendance at male sporting events far exceeds attendance at female sporting events. Although the popularity of football may trump many male and female sports, many girls' basketball teams are not given the same luxuries as boys' basketball teams. For instance last year in my school district our varsity girls' basketball team played before the varsity boys' basketball team every single game. In previous seasons the junior varsity always played before the varsity. What kind of a message is that sending to our girls?

The message is clearly received by all, that women's athletics are not as important in the pecking order as men's athletics. As a coach, I need to be careful to not play into this discrepancy. Why is it that homecoming and winterfest activities always culminate with a male sports team playing? This season, the high school in my district cannot have homecoming against the team they originally scheduled this year, because the team they scheduled does not have a varsity football team. Why not let the culminating event of homecoming week be a girls' varsity volleyball match instead of moving homecoming to a different week with a home football game?

Gender equity in the United States is much better than when my mother was in high school some forty years ago, but clearly with the discrepancies I listed above, we

have a long ways to go. I have always coached boys' basketball, but it is important for me to help bring about change in the view of women's athletics. If I have a daughter someday, I want her to be afforded not only the opportunities to play sports but to be treated as well as a male playing sports.

I believe that cross-gendered coaching is something that can be successful given the right circumstances. Whether it is a male coaching females or a female coaching males, any coach can be a successful and an effective coach if that coach has the backing of the players, community, and administration. I believe that cross-gender coaching takes more care and forethought, as more potential problems can arise (i.e.- a male football coach slapping a football player's butt after a nice play would be thought of much differently if he did the same thing to a female volleyball player). Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart reached the MHSAA Boys' Basketball Finals in 2006 with a female head coach. Successful coaches should be able to coach across genders; however, they must also be more conscientious about their actions.

I do not believe that athletes should have to prove their sexual orientation to coaches. An athlete's sexual orientation has zero impact on how effective that player is on the playing field. A coach should not be asking or demand to know such intimate aspects of their athlete's lives. Coaches often get to know players quite well, and a good relationship between the coach and player often is a key element in success. This does not mean that a coach needs to know everything about a player's personal life. Each

player has the right to his/her own privacy and should not be discriminated against based upon one's sexual orientation.

Equity for People of Color

As coaches, it is our responsibility to encourage diversity in gender, race, and ethnicity. Our world today is growing in diversity, and so should our sports world. It is my opinion that in order to do this at all levels, the NCAA and professional sports need to diversify their coaches, as well. It is inexcusable for only twelve division one FBS (football bowl subdivision) football coaches to be of African-American descent, when more than half of the players are African-American (Graves, 2010). Blacks make up forty-six percent of college football players, yet only ten percent of the coaches are black (Coakley, 2004). How can African-Americans be represented so strongly among the participants and so weakly represented among the coaches? In athletics, the best players will play. Playing time is determined largely by a person's ability level. This doesn't appear to be true of coaching.

Coaching and administration is a powerful position within an athletic department. For years the only people inhabiting these spots were white males. The structure of athletics was one that favored white men. Few minorities were given these jobs as the power structure was already in place and white men did not want to surrender their power. Many coaches, including former University of Kentucky basketball coach Adolph Rupp, even refused for years to allow non-white players to play on his teams. Even when a minority athlete could outperform a white athlete, Rupp was resistant to the

change as it might take away authority from whites. It was not until the late 1960s that Rupp signed his first African-American player, Tom Payne (Leonard, 2010). If Rupp, one of the winningest coaches in the history of college basketball went over thirty years without recruiting a minority player, it is easy to believe the same power structure is still in place in various parts of athletics today. Rupp, although one of college basketball's most winning coaches, could have missed out on many more victories and championships had he recruited the best athletes/players regardless of race. This is still the case now with minorities being underrepresented in athletic administration, fans attending games, team owners, coaches, and officials.

For years athletics missed out on opportunities to see the best players play. Rupp refused to recruit minorities and the Negro leagues existed in baseball until Jackie Robinson, with the help of Branch Rickey, broke baseball's color barrier in 1947. Many minority players missed their opportunity because of racism and bigotry. If this is true for some of our best athletes, the same can also be true across all levels of sport. Tony Dungy (football) and Doc Rivers (basketball) are both of African-American descent, and both are top coaches in their profession. Each of them has led their team to a world championship. Imagine how many more minority coaches and athletic administrators could have been successful and effective if they had been given the opportunity. As a society, we cannot be satisfied with a few minority coaches scattered around athletics. We must hire the right person for the right job, and leave race out of the question.

Cutting Players

Cutting players from a team is never easy, and it is one of the duties that is the most difficult for any coach to do. As I want to be a varsity basketball coach, cuts may well be inevitable for me during my coaching tenure. When I have to make cuts, I will do what my high school basketball coach did. I will talk to each player, face to face, and explain the reasons why the cut was being made. Although this is a difficult process, approaching each player face to face is the classy and honorable thing to do. Each student-athlete is taking a risk by trying out, and the coach owes each player the dignity to speak to him/her individually. Last year, as a freshmen boys' basketball coach I cut two players from the team. Although difficult, I did speak face to face with both students and explained to them their strengths and weaknesses. I offered both students the opportunity to continue to develop their skills and to try out again the following year.

As a coach, I will try to keep as many players as possible on my team, so long as those players benefit the team in some way. To me, athletic skills are important, but the various skills and values each individual player brings to a team are immeasurable. Not every player can be the high scorer; role players are also needed on teams. If I feel that a player has something positive to contribute to the team, then I will keep that player, if I have space on the squad. I will not base cuts just on athletic skill, but a student-athlete must be able to keep up with the flow of the sport both mentally and physically. I will use as a basis in making my cuts what I call the "Three C's", which are (in order of importance): character, commitment, and credentials.

The first thing I will look for is a player's character. If a student-athlete has good character, he or she will be a good representation of the type of player I want on my team. Having people with good character is essential in being successful in any enterprise, and that includes athletics. Allowing players who demonstrate poor character on my team would be a detriment to the rest of the team. It would eventually hurt the team's chemistry. Character is the most important thing I will consider when making cuts.

The second thing I will look at is a player's commitment. If a player is committed to improving his/her game and committed to helping the team win and achieve goals, that makes the teaching aspect of coaching much easier. Some players go out for athletic teams for personal glory or because their friends play or any variety of different reasons. I feel students who love the sport and are dedicated to improving their skills have the type of commitment that is essential for success. If all players are on the same page and working toward a collective goal, a team's success has no limits. Commitment is the second thing I will look for when cutting players.

Finally, I will look at a player's credentials. Credentials for players would include his/her athleticism and potential. A player's athleticism and potential are also important to a team's success. Good character and a total team commitment are vitally important, but if you can't put the ball in the hoop, then it will be difficult to win basketball games. Credentials are often the first factor that a coach looks at when weeding out the players that he or she will cut. I feel that although a game or two might

be won with better players, the life lessons learned and the team chemistry that can be achieved with character and commitment far outweigh an additional victory or two.

The three C's are all important in my formation of a team. I weight character and commitment higher than credentials, because in the real world if you have poor character and are a selfish individual, you will not be an attractive candidate for employment. The three C's will help me in making cuts, one of the most difficult things any coach has to do. The more the coach deals with cutting players on a personal, dignified level, the more respect that coach will garner from his/her team and from the local community.

Pay-to-Play

Pay-to-play sports are becoming increasingly popular among youth and high school sports. During the difficult economic times we are currently experiencing in Michigan many of the state's districts have had to make budget cuts and sports have taken a significant amount of the hit. Understandably districts do not want to cut anything having to do with academics, but in cutting revenue for athletics, fewer students are given the ability to participate in sports. To offset the money being lost from budget cuts, many districts have gone to pay-to-play sports. Although I believe pay-to-play sports are a much better alternative than some or all sports programs being cut, I think they can cause some possible problems.

Forcing students to pay in order to participate in youth or high school athletics can be dangerous. Some students and students' families will not be able to afford to let their

children participate in sports. Even a twenty-five dollar fee to play a seasonal sport may be too much of a financial burden for some students and their families. In my district, nearly half of our students are on free and reduced lunch, and there is no way that these students and their parents could afford to pay the costs of sports when other family bills must take precedence. Pay-to-play sports separate the economically wealthy from the lower socio-economic class. If all students in public school are given the right to a good education regardless of financial situation, the same should be true for athletic participation.

Pay-to-play sports also has other potential problems. If a parent does pay for their child to play a sport, should a parent with a child who is a bench warmer pay as much as the parent of the star player? Many parents investing money into allowing their children to play athletics might be understandably upset if their child is not one of the members of the team who is given playing time. Frustrated parents often are one of a coach's biggest headaches. I feel that pay-to-play sports would only add more of these headaches for a coach.

Some parents already invest a great deal of their own money into their children's athletic programs and sporting events. Many parents spend hundreds, perhaps thousands, of dollars a year helping their child achieve high levels of athletic excellence. Parents spend money on equipment, private lessons, facilities, etc. to give their children the best opportunities to excel. A sport like hockey already has parents investing a great deal of money. Parents of a hockey player must provide protective equipment, rent ice time, and

often have to travel greater distances to play because of the lack of teams. A hockey parent who is already paying a great deal of money for their son/daughter to play the sport will not want to pay additional money for their son/daughter to be a member of the team.

Instituting pay-to-play in high school sports is a dangerous decision. I see few positive elements of pay-to-play and several drawbacks that I have already discussed. Pay-to-play sports is not an idea I think should be abandoned altogether; some children would not be able to participate in sports at all without this practice. I believe pay-to-play in athletics should only be used as a last resort. If a school district has to choose between eliminating programs or instituting pay-to-play, I hope they choose the latter. However, if I am ever an athletic administrator I will use pay-to-play only as a last resort.

Personal ethics and sportsmanship

Ethics in coaching is very important to me. I try to live by the philosophy that I don't ask my players to do anything that I wouldn't do myself. Being an ethical coach means doing things the right way. One of my high school basketball coach's favorite sayings was, "Character is who you are when no one is watching." This is also something I preach to my players. As a leader of young people I want to feel comfortable knowing that the young people that play on my teams are conducting themselves in a proper way in school, during competition, and in the community. My colleague Darren Oles tends to agree with me stating in his philosophy, "Good coaching is based purely in

leadership, a positive example, and instilling respect in your players (Oles, interview).” Coach Oles and I both coach the eighth grade boys’ basketball team, he coaches the “b” team and I coach the “a” team. Because of this shared belief that we are leaders of these young men it makes it easier for us to coach and for our players to learn. Coaches are teachers of more than their sport and often have a higher degree of impact than a teacher. Because of this influence and what I as a coach preach to my team, I need to abide by the same rules.

“Athletics provides excellent opportunities for youngsters to develop moral values (Sabock, page 5).” This statement is becoming increasingly true in our society. Large numbers of parents are now neglecting or choosing not to teach their children moral values. America of the 1950s would have never allowed children to back-talk adults or to not use their manners. Yet everyday, in my teaching, I encounter students who do not abide by these unwritten societal rules, often times because they have not been taught them at home. Therefore, if these important lessons are not being taught in the home, it could be argued that they need to be taught at school.

Golf is a sport that requires top moral values. Golf is a game where student-athletes have constant chances to bend or break rules without ever being challenged or caught. Some students do not hesitate to bend or break rules if it will benefit them in some way. This is not the society I want to live in. As coaches, we need to not only teach moral values but practice them as well.

As a basketball coach I once witnessed a coach who, in my mind, made a brilliant strategic (yet morally corrupt) coaching move. A struggling free throw shooter fouled with very little time left on the clock and the coach called a timeout. After the timeout the coach sent his best free throw shooter to the line instead of the less talented shooter. The good shooter made the free throws and in doing so gave his team the victory. The officials never noticed that the player who was actually fouled was not the one shooting the free throws. There is no question in my mind the strategy employed by this coach was excellent from a win/loss standpoint. However, the lack of coaching ethics showed by this coach will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression on his players and anyone who saw the game. The message sent either directly or indirectly is, "If you cheat and don't get caught, good things can happen." No parent, teacher, coach, or responsible adult would ever wish to teach children such a lesson. Although the coach may not have explicitly told the players to cheat, his message was conveyed loud and clear by his actions. "Participation in athletics can provide one of the greatest opportunities for youngsters to learn honesty, integrity, dignity, the need to obey rules and ethical behavior. However, young people can also learn the opposite of all these values through athletics (Sabock, page 4)." This coach may emphasize good ethical character with his players, but his actions spoke more than his words ever could.

Similarly, coaches should stand up for what is best for their athletes. Over the last decade we have heard more and more about the use of performance enhancing drugs by athletes. By turning our heads from athletes who are involved in these practices, we as

coaches are not looking out for athletes' best interest. Performance enhancing drugs may help an athlete's performance in the short run, but they have a permanent negative outcome on the athlete's health in the long run. As coaches, with more life experience than our players, it is our responsibility to look out for the best interest of the athlete, not the quick fix.

Sportsmanship is something I believe is getting lost in the shuffle of sports. Athletes at the highest level often disregard being a good sportsman. It is not required for NBA and NFL players to go thorough lines and exchange handshakes after the game. Very few players choose to do this practice on their own. In youth and high school sports we require our athletes to always shake hands at the end of each game. When the best players in sports are neglecting this gesture, they are setting a bad example for youth and high school players. If NBA commissioner David Stern and NFL commissioner Roger Goodell were to institute rules (and consequences for breaking them) about sportsmanship, perhaps we would see more of a buy-in of this practice at the lower athletic levels. Young athletes mimic their athletic heroes. If NFL wide receiver Terrell Owens spikes a ball, than hundreds of kids who love Owens all over the country will do the same when they catch a touchdown pass.

As coaches we unfortunately cannot expect our elite athletes to always demonstrate good sportsmanship; therefore, this role of being a good sport must be thoroughly emphasized by the coaches. Instead of taunting an opponent, we must help a player get up when they fall or shake hands at the end of a game. Some athletes simply

play the game. I want my athletes to play the game the way it was meant to be played. Honorable men and women are the individuals for whom sport is meant. They possess a high degree of moral value and integrity. In my own coaching, whenever making an important decision, or any decision for that matter, I should always ask myself, "...What will be most important to you, the game or your own integrity (Sabock, p. 7)?" To me, integrity far outweighs the results of any game, and will be remembered years later. Players mimic what the coaches do. A player is more likely to be a good sportsman, if he/she sees the same action from his/her coach.

I have wanted to coach since my junior year in high school, when I served as an assistant coach for a seventh grade basketball team. Since that time, I have known that I wanted to be a teacher/mentor to young people. I know that others may disagree with my coaching philosophy, but I have given this subject a great deal of thought, and I feel very strongly about my convictions. Just as players must continually work on their games, coaches must also continue to work on their craft, if they want to see progress. I look at my coaching philosophy and compare it to the Constitution. What is written is the law, but that doesn't mean that I cannot amend my philosophy, as I deem necessary.

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2 youth sport agencies:

1. <http://www.lehighvalleyaaau.com/Mission.html>

Lehigh Valley (Pennsylvania) Girls' AAU basketball

2. <http://www.ci.novato.ca.us/Index.aspx?page=920>

City of Navato, CA= this city's youth sports philosophy is listed

2 youth coaches:

Craig Harrison and Darren Oles

1. Craig Harrison (former Central Montcalm Middle School basketball coach):
“One of the primary focuses is the teaching of fundamentals. We want to teach the fundamentals of team play, working within offensive and defensive structure. We want to teach the rules and strategy, because kids often do not know them.”
“Give kids an opportunity to improve. Let kids learn and make mistakes to get them experience.” “Let them have fun and let them learn, but set them up for success down the road.”
2. Darren Oles (Central Montcalm Middle School basketball coach): “Good coaching is based purely in leadership, a positive example, and instilling respect in your players.” (from Wooden philosophy)

2 high school coaches:

1. Brad Hansen (former high school basketball coach, Central Montcalm High School): “I would rather be an effective coach than a successful coach. A successful coach wins and wins at all costs, i.e.- John Calipari, an effective coach wins and in doing so wins the right way.”
2. Kris Kolbe (Associate Head Coach, Varsity Football, Central Montcalm High School): “I try to instill values into kids that they will use in the game and that will also carry over to life.”

2 college coaches:

1. <http://www.sterling.edu/athletics/teams/mens-basketball/philosophy-page>
-Sterling College Men's Basketball Head Coach, Dean Jaderston
2. Coach Wooden= <http://www.coachlikeapro.com/john-wooden.html>
-former UCLA Men's Basketball Head Coach, John Wooden
3. Coach Izzo= <http://www.cracked.com/funny-4688-tom-izzo/>
-Michigan State University Men's Basketball Head Coach, Tom Izzo "Players Play, Tough Players Win"

2 high school associations:

1. Michigan High School Athletic Association's Coaches Advancement Program (CAP)
<http://www.mhsaa.com/TrainingEducation/CoachesAdvancementProgram.aspx>
2. Montana High School Association: <http://www.mhsa.org/>