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# 50 things learned as high school coach

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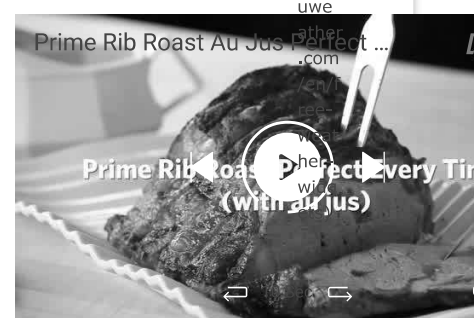
**By Bob Seggerson - Guest Columnist**

Here are 50 things I learned as a high school basketball coach

1. It doesn't get any better than practicing in a closed gym with your team and preparing for a big game
2. The bench seats on those long, yellow school buses were not built with the comfort of adults in mind
3. Ninety-five percent of parents are great. The other 5 percent can drive you nuts. Acquire a thick skin
4. As the season progresses, you become increasingly preoccupied with your team

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they are

11. Make it a rule for your players: No relationship breakups during the season
12. After a particularly tough loss, keep in mind that there are 7.7 billion people on the planet that don't know or care about it and the vast majority of your fans are worrying about something else within 24 hours
13. Save your timeouts
14. Don't call your student helpers managers, call them student assistants and treat them like one
15. Potential scholarship players should think about going one level below where they think they can play and two levels below where their old man thinks they can play
16. Never blame officials for your loss and don't let your players do it either. Don't let excuses seep into your program
17. During practice, the gym is a classroom and the coach is the teacher. You need an organized, detailed plan with specific goals and a focused, disciplined group of players (students) receptive to learning
18. Make your team meetings short and to the point. Don't bore your team
19. Great teams come in all shapes, sizes and style of play but they all share a common trait: they are mentally and physically tough and will play through any kind of adversity they face

5. Years after you retire, you won't be able to remember most of your wins but you will remember every single one of your losses.

6. Count on a senior exceeding your expectations every year

7. Schedule dates with your wife during the season. Put them on your calendar in advance. Do not alter your calendar

8. The single most important trait when dealing with your team and players is patience

9. Make your school counselor an important part of your network. Know where all of your players stand academically every week

10. Leaders in the locker room are just as important as leaders on the floor and they may not be the same guys. Make sure you know who

- Yes, soon
- Yes, eventually
- No, never
- Other / No opinion

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20. Keep the game simple for your players. You don't have the time to reinvent the wheel
21. Don't let your team peak early. Switch lineups, change the pace, do something. Let them come to a boil late in the season
22. A loyal group of long term, committed assistant coaches, all the way through your feeder system, is the foundation for every successful basketball program. There are no exceptions to this rule
23. Break up any on-court marriages quickly (two players who only pass to each other)
24. If you are tired and worn out, so are your players.
25. Turnovers are rarely spaced evenly throughout a game. They come in bunches, like a spreading virus
26. Never use the word "I" when discussing your team or program. Use "We"
27. Remember your players want discipline even if they don't admit it. Draw lines
28. Don't worry if your players don't like you while you are coaching them. Worry if they will like you when they are 30 years old and they appreciate the role you played in their character development
29. If you're looking for an honest, accurate assessment of an athlete's ability and potential, ask their coach, not their family or friends
30. There will be games when you look at your team on the floor and think, "this team looks like they've never been coached."
31. If you have a shooter mired in a slump, tell him/her, "somebody's going to pay for this, soon"
32. Don't select or vote for team captains. Wait for the first game and see who walks out to half-court to meet the officials. Those are your leaders
33. Avoid bars, barber shops and all Internet sites where your school's basketball fans congregate
34. Successful coaches are often more motivated by the fear of losing than they are by the rewards of winning
35. Losing a couple games to rigorous competition will be more valuable to your team than piling up wins against a cupcake schedule
36. Even in this age of volume 3-point shooting, the most difficult player to defend is the one who can consistently get to the rim
37. The best motivator you have is the bench
38. If you don't have a savvy point guard, you are in for a world of hurt

39. Never advise a junior high player they are a scholarship prospect and should concentrate on just one sport. Many will return in the future and tell you they wish they had played other sports

40. An athlete's memory of their individual exploits often grow in size and legend as they age

41. Post-game, win or lose, a coach's adrenalin can remain in high gear into the early morning hours. Keep a pile of good books bedside

42. In terms of playing time: Use 8, Rotate 7, Play 6, Trust 5

43. Tell your team you don't give a rat's behind what people outside the locker room think about you and your team but that you care deeply about what the people inside the locker room are feeling

44. The unselfish chemistry of your team is more important than its level of talent

45. Building confidence in your players and team is job one

46. Your wife and family will hear the critics in the stands but they won't tell you about it

47. Use your team's most difficult losses as an opportunity to preach the value of resiliency. You never want to play a great team after they've lost a game

48. Your greatest satisfaction will come from seeing your former players and student assistants become successful and happy and productive leaders in their community

49. Never lose the dreams and imagination about the game that you had as a kid growing up

50. The last game you coached is always the one that sticks in your craw. Keeping that in mind, if possible, make the last game of your coaching career a win in the state championship game

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