

Building your system and identity at the JH level

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1. It starts with creating the culture.

When you want to build a program it's important to put your stamp on it immediately. What do you want to be known for? A question we ask our kids are..."What do you want your identity to be?? We start preaching it at a JH level! Elementary Level!!

A. 1. Toughness 2. Integrity (doing the right things) 3. Selflessness (Be there for each other) and 4. Hard Work. These are four things that we want to stress. We let them know we will take culture (doing the right things) over talent otherwise it can result in a poisoning of your program from the top down. If you teach hard working, blue collar players who buy in over the superstar, players will notice and buy in. Your team will also win more games because they will be a cohesive, hard working group.

2. The youth program is the foundation.

The youth program is the foundation for a great program. Great programs have extensive youth programs that emphasize the important things: I feel this is the most important of all!!!

1. fundamental skill development,

Many times it's tricky to get youth coaches to run the same system as the varsity, worry less about wins and more about development, and teach more than just the game, but when you get coaches who do you are in great shape. Get the basics down, start building muscle-memory-reflex!

3. Emphasis on fundamentals, especially defense, and shooting.

"There's more to the game than shooting" is the classic Coach Norman Dale comment from Hoosiers. And while I do agree with that comment, shooting is the most important skill in the game. If you can't shoot it makes winning very, very hard. If it were up to me, every team from elementary to high school would shoot 20 minutes a day at practice and heavily in summer workouts as well. Keep them close to the basket until their form is good enough! Along with that every player should come up playing using man to man concepts even if your defense is zone. There are many like principles. If you can get players coming onto your varsity with this defensive knowledge and like terminology, the transition to high school is much easier and practice go much smoother!

4. Summer improvement is where it starts and ends.

Summer workouts have to be a priority for all players. This is where you get better. Teams that are fundamentally sound rarely lose games because of Xs and Os. You do have to make it competitive and fun however. Players need to look forward to coming to the gym. Also, get them playing in their driveways, parks and etc. Encourage them to call each other, get together and play. I also think playing as a group in the summer benefits teams, Don't concern with wins and losses, each player needs to have a chance to work and get better and play with future teammates. If you lack talent you'd better be able to play together.

5. Create tradition, emphasize tradition.

Anytime you want ownership over a program you need to start your tradition and carry on the traditions of old. Players need to be reminded where they came from and know the great players/teams of the past in your school. Tradition breeds pride and pride breeds hard work. You need to make your players feel like playing for your school is an honor. They are

merely holding a great torch and not the program. If your program is not good, then we tell them they can change the culture, climate, get the community excited again.

6. Get your Excitement out there.

We give every custodian in our program a shirt. Every elementary kid got a shirt. Give away as much stuff as you can, especially to your younger players, parents, community members. Whether you are small town or big city, the more people that wear your gear the more you name is out there, which is a good thing. Do team meals, bowling, etc. Acknowledge when you see kids out shooting or playing, I have even brought them a gatorade.

7. Have the right system for you and run it at every level, elementary to varsity.

I can't stress this enough. Whether you are a 2-3 zone and flex team or a motion and man team, every level below you needs to run concepts of the same thing.

- A.** Teach the game of basketball, not offenses, help them be students of the game
- B.** You can't put a value on having players who show up knowing the basics of what you are trying to do. When you do that you cut down on teaching time and can do so much more.

8. You must have the best coaching staff, and use them the correct way.

Having the "best staff" whether they are staff member or community, Get them to be involved, excited and loyal! I stress loyal!! The doesn't mean great X and O guys or great game coaches at every level. I have been

around a lot of assistant coaches who were invaluable to the program.

What is the key to a great staff? The following five things:

1. 100% buy in.

- No matter how "good" they are, if they don't buy in they must go. They HAVE TO run what you want run, how you want run it.
- This doesn't mean they are yes men by any means. The best staffs argue behind closed doors but once they are in front of the kids everyone is on the same page.

2. 100% loyalty.

- Even if they buy in, it doesn't matter if they are telling others that you are doing it wrong. Can't have an assistant tell the parents..... "If I was the head coach.....!"

3. 100% work ethic.

- Coaches have to work hard and be willing to scout, stay late, work in the summers, etc.

4. 100% caring for the players

- If they care more about themselves than their players they need to go. Preach the values you want in your program as well.

5. 100% about development.

- Have to have guys at the lower levels who are willing to sacrifice wins for getting players ready to play at the next level.

***You also have to use your coaches in the right way. Every coach has a strong point, so put them in position to be successful.

9. Must have patience with common sense.

Rome wasn't built in a day, or a year, and neither is a basketball program. Build a foundation that will last! As long as you are laying the foundation with a solid youth program, everyone running the same stuff, and having the right culture you are going to be consistent!! (90's south Sioux story)

- 1.** Kids will change mentally and physically, don't judge them in a hurry.

2. Encourage kids to get out of their comfort zone, not afraid to fail, It is ok to make a mistake, use it as a chance to teach and correct.
3. Look at the big picture, If they know you care, they will work harder.
4. Keep practice high energy and positive. Make them want to be there.

There is no magic formula outside of hard work and no compromises. We expect them to put the time in, we must be willing to put the time in also. Remember, fundamentals, fundamentals, fundamentals,

Contact Information:

John Miller

millerj811@gmail.com

402-340-9215