

LADY VIKING BASKETBALL

Lori Woodland—Women's Basketball Coach

For any athletic program to be successful, guiding principles for the team and individual athletes must be established. In 1988, I came to realize how important it was to have a consistent coaching and team philosophy to which my staff, my players, and I could conform and adhere. From this philosophy, a system was developed which would keep our daily coaching priorities on track and ensure our team's progress toward the desired objectives.

THE PHILOSOPHY

The chart begins with our Statement of Philosophy: We're here to win the game of life. In 1975, I was first hired as a head coach. I knew then my greatest responsibility as a coach was to build the kind of moral character and value system within each of my girls that would insure her success after basketball. I recognized that no one would have more time and a greater opportunity than I to play a role in molding them into model citizens.

My coaching philosophy is divided into three categories or priorities: faith, academic achievement and potential as a player.

With this in mind, my basic coaching philosophy is divided into three categories or priorities. Because Ricks College is a private school owned and operated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, my first priority is teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. I desire to build within each of my players, through her experience in our program, stronger faith and commitment to something bigger than herself. I feel obligated to help her recognize the necessity of constant self-development and improvement, with the objective of becoming rather than just being.

Secondly, I stress the importance of academic achievement. Since coming to Ricks in 1985, with the exception of one athlete, every player who has stayed in our program for two seasons has graduated with an associate degree. Our grade point average has been consistently above a 3.2, and for several years we have been the top, or near the top, academic basketball team in the NJCAA.

My third priority is that each young lady develop her greatest potential as a player. We, like every other team in the NJCAA, work long and hard to become the best team in our region as well as one of the top-ranked teams at the national level. I often hear coaches comment that they never stress winning during the season. I cannot say I am one of these coaches. I want to win games and my players know it; however, they also know with

a complete surety, I will not sacrifice the aforementioned priorities to win a game, a title or championship. I understand how important winning is to our program and our school; however, I refuse to sacrifice any of those things which I know to be instrumental in developing strong character and lifelong success in order to win a game.

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THE VALUES

The slogans, *We will be more successful united on a poor idea than divided on a good one*, *Unity is power*, and *We need us*, are printed on the walls of our locker room and stressed in every practice session. These meaningful slogans send a constant reminder to our players of the importance of the team concept. As time passes our players become more and more converted to this team vision until the values of integrity and maturity are a natural consequence.

If we define integrity as having the moral courage to make our actions consistent with our knowledge of right and wrong, then integrity encompasses all. If a player has integrity, she will be loyal, honest, chaste, and desire all others with whom she associates to possess those same qualities. Taunting an opponent will not be a part of her game; rather, a mutual attitude of respect may develop between her and the opposition.

Developing maturity within our players seems to come naturally as integrity and the importance of team are stressed. I believe young people want to be looked upon as good, dependable, and reliable. I also know most continue to need direction in their development of these desired qualities.

THE FOUNDATION

I link our value system and our programs foundation together by stressing the importance of being the best we can be at all we attempt. Teaching the sound fundamentals of the game as well as being the best conditioned team in our region lay a firm base toward our goal of becoming our best selves and team.

THE SYSTEM

Our coaching system is prioritized into four individual components of the game. I feel the development of these four components to be most important and, if developed properly, the key to a successful program.

We work long and hard to become a solid and sound defensive team. We teach various defensive strategies and employ them at different

times throughout the season and against different offensive strategies used against us throughout the year.

Setting the goal to be the top rebounding team in our league has certainly added to our success. We initially teach basic defensive and offensive rebounding techniques but seldom drill singularly on rebounding. Instead, after each attempted shot, we verbally remind our players to block out and rebound. Our players know they always play every shot as though it is missed and then each rebounds as though she were the only rebounder on the team.

The third component which has contributed to our success is our belief in proper shot selection. We must score, at the very least, one point per possession. Therefore our players have to take good shots. I seldom tell a player not to shoot; however, I do tell them the shots they should shoot. I believe a player who consistently shoots off the dribble, off balance, or is rushed in her shot, is selfish. I want our players to take only those shots which our team creates for them or a shot which they create for themselves by using sound and unselfish fundamental principles.

Taking care of the basketball is the fourth component of the game which we stress in our system. Turnovers take away the opportunity to score on a possession and therefore lower our point-per-possession ratio. I have seen my teams begin a season giving up more than 30 turnovers a game and finish the year giving up fewer than five a game once they reached the national tournament in March.

In conclusion, I know as coaches we can offer the young women who come under our charge and tutelage a positive growth experience and one they will long cherish. We can do so by establishing a sound philosophy, teaching a strong value system, laying a firm team foundation, and developing a winning system which will give stability and constancy to our girls. Coaching at any level certainly has its individual challenges, and winning or losing often dictates what those challenges will be. However, when the game is over and the scoreboard designates a winner and a loser, I hope and often pray my girls had fun. My players know having a team of many heroes is much more enjoyable than having a team with one or two stars. They also understand they have lost, or are losers, only when they look, act, or talk like losers. At Ricks College we never talk about losing because we know we never lose. However we do, at times, take second place. ☺

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