

September 2016

Why We Do This!

By: Jason Wolfard, Lindbergh High School - Editor

As we gear up for a new season, we are always hit with fresh new ideas and concepts we would like to add into our teams and programs. We hit up the pre-season clinic schedule and watch practices and start to build up a list of new things to add in. I remember as a new coach trying to “find my way” with what I wanted to do with my team. From using strategy and ideas from my past experiences, to absorbing anything and everything that was working for others, I found myself with a ton of pages of notes and not quite sure where to begin when it came time to get ready for that first practice. Then over the years, I would repeat the same process and add more to my notebook, compiling many notebooks of ideas.

I also remember hearing veteran coaches talk about where they were when they began and where they were at that point in their career. They had the path and the way they did things. Being a new coach, while I would listen to them, I would still try to cram as many new things as possible. Definitely the old saying of “Jack of all trades, master of none” was crying out in my process.

My how that has changed for me over the years and now heading into my 12th year as a head coach. Now I “get it” and know what they are talking about. Now I have rooted myself over the past three years into a foundation I can build on. But a lot of that is built on the “what” and “how” we do things. This summer I was fortunate enough to attend a Coaching for Character conference here in St. Louis. I was able to hear from several people, some of whom have contributed to this edition of the Hard Court Herald, but it started with a man by the name of Joe Ehrman. If you have not read his books “Season of Life” and “Inside Out Coaching”, I highly recommend them! While I could go on and on about the nuggets I picked up from him, the most interesting thing they dealt with weren’t a new basketball strategy. The focus was on relationships with players.

Now isn’t that why we got into coaching in the first place? I’ll be very transparent here...when I first started coaching it was because I decided not to play college basketball anymore, but I loved this game so much that I didn’t want to just eliminate it from my life. So coaching basketball it was. I got to keep doing something I loved – be immersed in the game of basketball! But being young, I really didn’t know the “Why”. I had learned all the “Whats” and “Hows”, but the “Why” wasn’t very deep.

So as you start to read through this newsletter edition, attend clinics, talk to other coaches, and go through the pre-season grind, I’m going to challenge you (especially young coaches) to figure out your “Why”! Work on developing a coaching mission statement. That was one of the biggest take-aways I had from Chris Rastelli and his colleagues from Tappen Zee High School in New York! Every coach in that athletic program has a personal coaching mission statement. It helps them establish their culture that what they build their relationships off of. They share that statement with each other, with their AD, with the kids, and with the parents. It is a statement that focuses on 3 values that help drive them to be a transformational coach instead of a transactional coach. It helps them see the larger impact they have on their athletes that go beyond a game, score, or a win-loss record.

So after you have looked into it, work on coming up with your personal Coaching Mission Statement, and better yet share it with me as I would love to hear it. I'll end with my personal coaching statement that I have worked the past month on developing...

I coach to inspire young men to be driven in the pursuit of their dreams and exemplify the values of gratitude, selflessness, and respect.

If you would ever like to talk more about this idea, I'd love to set up a time to talk and share. Just send me an email (coachjwolfard@gmail.com). Best of luck with the start of the new season and I hope to see you at the MBCA Clinic on September 22!

The Drip - Molly Grisham

I bought my house almost three years ago. For some time now I have noticed a "clicking" noise in my kitchen. Well, I hear it while I'm in my kitchen but the noise is coming from the ceiling and on the other side of that ceiling is my master bathroom. I can't tell you when I first noticed it, a few weeks, a few months? I don't know. But I can tell you my thought process has been something like; that is a click, not a drip ... and if it were a drip there would be damage... and I can't see any damage... so everything must be fine...

Saturday morning after I had taken a shower and while I was eating breakfast I clearly heard the clicking noise right above my head. It was loud and it happened over and over again. I finally came to terms with the belief that it was in fact a drip. But, there was no visible damage, so everything must be fine, right?

Later that day I came home from running some errands. A large water-stain and a wet ceiling were there to greet me. I knew it would cost me more to call a plumber since it was a weekend but I had visions of my ceiling caving in or my housing flooding so I made a call for help.

The plumber arrived and said he couldn't be certain but he was pretty sure he needed to re-caulk the space between my tub and shower wall. I paid him nearly 100 times the cost of some caulk for a job I could have done myself if only I had paid attention to the drip.

I wish I could say I was the only one who has ever waited for damage to appear before taking action, but the truth is it happens all the time. We allow people to stay in leadership positions when we know it is the wrong fit. We allow people to erode our culture when we clearly know what they are doing. We avoid hard conversations and pretend that everything is fine. We do this because we can't yet see the damage, but we know the damage is happening beneath the surface.

As coaches we are responsible for developing our student-athletes as people and as young leaders. We have tremendous influence in their lives. While we are facing many challenges in coaching we must continue to hold our players accountable and correct behavior that isn't healthy and productive. It is easy to ignore, but the damage is being done.

Great leaders create healthy cultures and develop their people. They are able to do so because great leaders call it what it is, they pay attention to and deal with the drip before the damage is even visible.

Trust me, waiting for the damage to appear before you take action is a costly mistake.

Deal with the drip.

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empower. inspire. serve. grow.
"A leader is a person of influence..."

Winning Becomes the By-Product of Doing the Right Thing

How many coaches would like to win more games? Start by teaching the whole heart of your players and you'll begin to watch a positive change in the culture of your program. As a coach, you already know, it's never really enough to walk through just X's and O's and expect great return. The culture you create when you have fully invested your heart into another person goes well beyond your imagination and expectations.

When reflecting on the culture of your program, start by asking yourself the following questions: Have you ever ended a season with a feeling of emptiness? Have you ever looked forward to the following season before the current one is finished? Have you ever allowed a season to go by without creating life-long relationships with your players? If the answer to any of those questions is a yes, it's time to start asking WHY. Take a moment to self-reflect and ask yourself: Were you truly invested in the heart of a child or were you focused on a "win at all cost" mentality to create a successful and productive season? Folks, if you aren't taking the time to intentionally create culture at every given opportunity, then you are not realizing the influence of your platform and it is time for a change! A greater investment in developing a culture yields a more rewarding sense of fulfillment and the wins will simply become a by-product of doing the right thing. I would argue that most coaches would agree to this sentiment, but simply don't know how to begin the implementation. Building a winning culture requires that you intentionally teach core values, empower leaders; and recognize, reinforce, and reward the importance of servant leadership.

At the very foundation of your program, you must look to establish a group of core values that you will not fray from, even in the face of adversity. These core values are non-negotiable and will ultimately become your building blocks to creating and establishing unbreakable relationships. These very relationships become immeasurable by any rubric. In fact, when you take the time to intentionally go out of your way to instill core values and forge solid relationships with your players, you have already begun to embark upon building a culture. Let's

face it, kids are impressionable and they look to mimic what they see and hear. Your platform in terms of influence as a coach is unrivaled by any other profession. The kids you coach come to your practice field daily because they want to, not because they have to.

Empowering young leaders is a necessity every adult should aspire to. We all have these kids that present leadership qualities on our teams, but other than making them captains we often don't know how to challenge their potential and allow them to grow. These leaders will carry your vision onto the field of play with their teammates, into your huddles, and out into the community. They'll begin to spread your culture to not only other players, but other teams they play on, and to their families as well. These types of leadership moments need to be recognized, reinforced, and rewarded. We can't always stop a practice to recognize what players are doing wrong. We must stop practices to intentionally reward culture changing behavior so that others jump on board and you fill the tank of the whole heart.

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Youth Coaches Corner

Building a Foundation For Your Players

By: Jason Wolfard, Head Boys Basketball Coach, Lindbergh High School (also coach of a 7th & 8th grade girls team and 4th grade boys team)

With our membership continuously growing, I wanted to add a new section to the newsletter that focuses just on youth coaches. As a high school coach, you try to pick up concepts and ideas from other high school coaches and college coaches. You quickly find out that some of these high school players can't do some of the great things that these college players are doing, so you have to adapt them to their skill level. The goal for this section is to help youth coaches bridge the gap and apply concepts they may learn from the high school level that work with their kids. Whether you are a current youth coach or you are a HS coach that has volunteer coaches in your youth program, the goal is to help them develop kids better.

In an age of the game where there are many that think playing more games will help kids get better and be ready to compete at the next level, there needs to be a mindset shift for those coaches (and sometimes parents). Many of our youth coaches put winning as the top priority over so many things with these young kids. Don't get me wrong, we all should want to win every game but we also know that doesn't always happen. And it doesn't happen for a multitude of reasons – you play a team that has more talent, your kids (ages 7-13) are just having an off day, you are missing some players due to other conflicts, or you are playing a team that is sitting in a zone and your awesome man to man plays won't work. Being a high school coach that has started to work with youth teams for a while now, I have seen all those things come into play. We start to lose sight of what is important because all we see is the

drastic difference on the scoreboard. Several things need to come into play here in order to help with this mindset shift...

Focus on Fundamentals

“Set it up” or “Run It Again”. Man I have heard that so much over the years at the youth coaching level. You know, you have that one play you have run over and over in practice with no defense and it looks great, and then all of a sudden when the game starts it doesn’t work. Ahhh...frustration! Your point guard can’t even make the entry pass. What to do now???

Don’t get me wrong, it’s great to have those “go to” plays for games, but if little Johnny can’t dribble with both hands and create separation from a defender to make a pass, let alone know if his teammate is open, and little Susie can’t shake that blanketed 5th grade defender who has no clue where the ball is, then none of those “go to” plays will work.

So when you are setting up your practices, you need to make sure that a large majority (I would suggest at least 80%) of your time is spent on the fundamentals of the game. When you work on those over and over, they eventually become habit. Here are some basic fundamentals to start with...

- Footwork – can your players come to a jump stop or 1-2 stop and pivot both ways on both feet while creating space?
- Getting open – do your players know how to get open against that face-guard defender? Better yet, go 2v1 or 2v2 and let the passer determine when his teammate is open.
- Shooting – not 3-pointers, but proper form when shooting (feet, eyes, elbow to eyebrow) and layups. Are you practicing various types of finishes around the rim at full speed? Warming up for layup lines isn’t going to help them make them in a fast paced game. Add a defensive chaser; have them pursue a loose ball and finish the play; start them in a defensive position and have them steal a pass with the correct hand and go full court to score.
- Defense – teach your kids man to man concepts...it will make your zone much better! On the ball, have them focus on staying lower than their man, keeping their hands out, and putting their nose in front of the ball and trying to deflect a pass. Off the ball, keep it simple – back to the baseline and get between your man and the ball while pointing to both. Start with those 2 concepts and you can build from there.

Catch them doing something great

“That’s not how we did it in practice.” Yep, I’ve heard that one too. The great thing about teaching fundamentals is as a coach you have so many more opportunities to catch every player doing something right in a game no matter what their skill level is. From coming to a jumpstop, dribbling with their weak hand, being in a help position without knowing it, or securing the ball with 2 hands, you can find every player doing something great and let them know that. Their confidence will increase so much and they will get better.

Maintain your focus on your team, not what the other team is doing

Let's face it, you are going to play that team that has the world's greatest 1-3-1 half court trap in youth sports history. All the preparation and coaching is going to go out the door. Is it frustrating, absolutely, but put yourself in a kids position where they spent an hour to an hour and a half working on skills at practice and a simple out of bounds play to now facing a trap at half court against 2 kids that are much taller. Sure you have to find some strategy, but you aren't going to control that other coach. If you get frustrated, the kids will get frustrated because they will see it. So instead, find ways to focus on your team getting better – half court defense, finding an open gap in the zone, sprinting the floor, diving after every loose ball, pivoting in traps and coach those up like there was a national championship of little things on the line. Not only will it help you maintain some focus and clarity, but it will help the kids focus on working hard and getting better instead of the scoreboard.

In the end, there are many other things you will be adding and doing. Running an effective hour or hour and a half practice is going to be key. My biggest two cents to throw at you as a youth coach are this...

- Don't think you know everything. Use your resources such as your local high school coach and find drills you can implement.
- In the end, make sure the kids are having fun and working hard. It will make all the other things so much easier to add in throughout the season.

Nutrition and Injury Recovery

An injury can be devastating not only for an athlete but for an entire team. One injury can shake a team's entire season. That is why every effort should be made for a fast and effective recovery.

When an injury occurs, a recovery plan often includes surgery, physical therapy, rehab, ice, and rest. Why is it that nutrition is so quickly overlooked when it is one of the most crucial components to recovery? I have had 5 knee surgeries and after everyone I was told that the surgery will be useless unless I do the rehab afterwards (true, and also a wonderful scare tactic to get the rehab done). No one ever told me that without the proper nutrition I will not capitalize on recovery and that it will take longer to get back to normal.

Most people know the basic components of nutrition: calories, protein, carbohydrates, fat, and fiber. Let's break this down fast and simple and look how these affect injury, recovery from injury, and what should be consumed during the crucial recovery window.

CALORIES – After my first ACL I was worried about gaining weight since I was no longer training (I was a senior in high school and had an ever important prom dress to wear in a couple months) so I cut my calories way back. Little did I know that major surgeries can increase metabolic rate up to 50% because your body is getting ready to repair injured tissue. A rough target for recovering athletes to shoot for as far as caloric consumption goes is less than when they are training, but more than if they were sedentary.

PROTEIN – This is an area athletes typically don't have a problem with. My first year of college I was so hooked on protein shakes that I would do extra workouts just so that I could have extra protein shakes; I was literally like a puppy doing tricks to get rewarded! But it is more than just getting protein. The amount, type and timing is crucial. Following the correct formula can decrease the loss of muscle mass and strength caused by an injury. Injured athletes should shoot for 1.5-2.0 g/kg body weight. To promote healing, protein should be consumed consistently and distributed evenly throughout the day instead of getting all your protein at dinner, which is the typical format for most people.

Look to get 20-30 grams per snack and meal, some ideas: 20-30 grams of protein=3 eggs, 1 cup cottage cheese, 1 cup greek yogurt, 3-4 oz meat, poultry, fish.

CARBOHYDRATES – Short and simple. Eating carbs before and during exercise helps maintain blood glucose, reduce stress hormone and reduces the risk of injury. Consume 5-12 g/kg body weight.

Think: Fruits, starchy veggies, whole grains

FAT – Low intake of dietary fat has been linked to an increase injury risk in females. Low intake in omega-3 fatty acids contributes to a stronger inflammatory response and may increase the severity of injury. Not all fats are created equal! Regulate intake of saturated fat. Avoid or limit trans fat.

Good fats: avocados, nuts, olive oil, canola oil, sunflower oil

FIBER – Pain meds=constipation. Eat fiber, end of story!
-prunes, bran cereal, oatmeal, whole-grain bread, legumes

A few other key points:

A key part in recovery from an injury, whether it's a rolled ankle or full blown knee blow out is to reduce inflammation.

Antioxidants neutralize damaging effects, the body produces some antioxidants on its own, but some must come from diet. Berries, dark chocolate, artichokes, kale, pecans, and salmon are good sources for antioxidants.

Vitamins. Vitamins C and E can help as connective tissue beings to regenerate (oranges, grapefruit, bell-peppers, and berries). Vitamin C is also needed to make collagen and repair tendons.

When injured, every little thing helps to get back out on the court faster. Nutrition is crucial, don't underestimate its importance and effectiveness!

Article by: Kelsey Grosulak
Courtesy of: FastModel Sports

“Coach, can I talk to you about my playing time?”

By: Molly Grisham

“Coach, can I talk to you about my playing time?” It’s the dreaded question for coaches everywhere. Several coaches have recently asked me how to talk with players who want to talk about their playing time. Now, let’s be honest, when a player asks to meet about playing time she probably doesn’t want to talk about the fact that she feels like she is playing too much. Most of the time, it’s a player who didn’t make the travel roster but she feels like she should be starting every game. Here are some different approaches that I have used with players in the past. Ultimately, you will need to pick the approach that you think will work best with your players.

1. “Facts, Figures, and Film” – I have found this to be a good starting point for players who may be feeling emotionally charged. Using tools like stats or film to show a comparison between how she is performing and how the players in front of her are performing is a good first step. You can also create an assessment where you ask her to rank herself in a variety of categories. Then share with her how the coaching staff ranked her in those same categories.

I used this approach with a player who was coming off the bench as a forward. We compared her stats to the starter in that position. The conversation went something like this; “So in the last game Kara took 6 shots and put 3 on frame. But in the last 4 games combined, which equals the same amount of time that Kara played in the last game, you took 1 shot and it wasn’t on frame. We need our forwards taking shots and putting them on frame.”

This approach attempts to take the emotion out of the conversation and make it feel less personal. It is critical that you give your players clear steps on how to improve in their areas of deficiency. For the player I mentioned it wasn’t just, “shoot more” it was; work on beating players 1v1 so you can shoot more, work on your first touch so you don’t turn over the ball and then you can shoot more, or develop your left foot so you can shoot more. It was important that we gave her specific skills that led to her being able to “shoot more” and we could demonstrate these moments on film as well.

2. “Start Doing, Stop Doing & Keep Doing” – This approach is great for a player who has the potential to get better but she needs to make some changes to get there. Often times the improvements players need to make can feel overwhelming. By looking at those adjustments in three categories we can make them much more manageable. The three questions I like to ask are:

- What do you need to start doing to become better than the player who is playing ahead of you?
- What do you need to stop doing to become better than the player who is playing ahead of you?
- And what do you need to keep doing?

After listening to the player’s answers it is important that the coaches also share their thoughts to make sure everyone is on the same page. I took this approach with a player who came into our meeting thinking I was going to say that she needed to completely overhaul her life. By thinking of the changes in these three ways it became much more manageable for her and we saw good growth in the off-season.

3. “What are you willing to sacrifice?”– I have found that this is a great option when you have an unhappy player who has not yet realized that she needs to quit. Unfortunately, many coaches are working in environments where they are told to try and talk players out of quitting. I’ve been there, but I hit a point where my own integrity mattered more than the unwritten department policy.

The first time I used this approach with a player I was amazed at the result. This player had no business being on a college team but I was told I couldn’t cut her or encourage her to quit. After the season she came in to talk about playing time and we began to talk about what she was willing to sacrifice in order to become better than the players who were in front of her on our depth chart. I asked her some of the following questions:

What have you done today to make yourself a better player? (She said her day had been very busy so she hadn’t been able to do anything.)

What are you willing to give up in order to get better? (She didn’t have an answer.)

What do you get out of being on this team? (She said friendships.)

I told her that she needed extra ball work in the spring. I asked if she was willing to give up her part-time job to fit in extra ball work. (Her answer was no.)

I expressed that she needed to drop her fitness test time by a specific number of minutes so she would have the endurance to stay on the field. I asked if she was willing to stay on campus over the summer to achieve this goal. (Her answer was no.)

This player was very involved on campus and I asked her if she was willing to give up some of her clubs and organizations to focus on her develop as a soccer player. (Her answer was no.)

And I ended with this question; if you knew we would win every game next season but you wouldn’t play would you still want to be a part of this team? (Her answer was no.)

I knew it wasn’t my place at that time to lecture her on her answers, but I did request that she give some more thought the questions I had asked. It was just a matter of days before she came back and said she realized there were other things in her life that were more important to her than soccer; her part-time job, a summer internship, life off the field, and that she finally realized she was playing soccer for the wrong reasons. She decided to leave the team and she did it on her terms. And for the record, I did hear about it from my AD but being honest with this player and helping her make this decision on her own was more important to me than departmental numbers and a lecture on retention.

4. “What’s the real problem?” – I believe of all your options this one is needed the most often, but it is also the most difficult to facilitate. This approach requires a unified coaching staff and a coach who can lead a heartfelt conversation.

I strongly believe that most athletes want to talk about playing time because they don’t know how to talk about the real issue. We need to help them figure out the problem behind the problem so we can solve the correct issue. Here’s an example; I had a player who was coming off the bench for us and she was getting about 30 minutes a game. The starter in her position was simply a better player and she was getting about 60 minutes a game. This player came in and asked, “What do I have to do to be a starter, I really want to be a starter.” There were some hints in that statement since she didn’t ask what she could do to get better or how she could help the team. Instead, she placed a lot of value on being a starter. I had a healthy relationship with this player and I knew I would be able to push the conversation to a deeper level.

It wasn't too long before we pulled back some layers and got to the real issue; she didn't feel that her parents saw the value in playing college soccer if she wasn't a starter. She believed they had invested greatly in her soccer career and she worried that by not starting they resented that investment. And lastly, through her tears, she said, "it's just really important to my dad that I am a starter and I want to make him proud." We finally got to the real issue. We talked about it from a rational standpoint and I asked some of the following questions:

- I know your parents put in a lot of time when you were in high school, but who is putting in the time and effort now? (She said that she was putting in the time and that she needed to see this as her experience.)
- Do you think your dad would be happy if you were a starter but played less minutes? (Her answer was no.)
- So does being a starter really solve the problem here? (Her answer was no.)
- Is it fair for your parents to love you more or less based on playing time? (Her reply, no, but that is how it is with them.)

We then talked about the value that I saw in what she brought to our team. I certainly couldn't make her dad express that he was proud of her but I was committed to being more consistent about letting her know that I valued what she brought to our team on and off the field regardless of her playing time.

Each of these options can be useful and you may have to try several options with the same player. The reality is your players are coming to you for clarity and we have a moral responsibility to help them with this process.

My advice; be honest, specific, compassionate, and listen to your inner voice of integrity. If you focus on those things you can't go wrong.

Courtesy of: www.apersonofinfluence.com

Septem

Q & A With The Difference Makers

Cuonzo Martin - University of Missouri Men's Basketball Coach

Cuonzo Martin is the new head coach of the University of Missouri Men's Basketball team. Coach Martin has spent the last nine years as an NCAA Division I head coach, compiling an overall record of 186-121. He began his head coaching career at Missouri State in 2008, spending three seasons as the Bears' head coach, while compiling a record of 61-41. In 2011, he left Springfield to become the head coach of the Tennessee Volunteers. In his three seasons in Knoxville, Coach Martin compiled a record of 63-41, as well as an NCAA Tournament Sweet 16 finish. Before coming to Missouri, Coach Martin was the head coach of the University of California, leading the Golden Bears to a record of 62-39 and another NCAA Tournament appearance. On March 15th, 2017, Coach Martin became the 20th men's basketball head coach in Missouri Tiger history. The Hard

Court Herald had a chance to catch up with the East Saint Louis native to talk about his new position and the state of Mizzou basketball.

Hard Court Herald: Coach, first off, congratulations on your new position as head coach of the University of Missouri Tigers. You've had about a couple months into the job. How are you settling in?

Coach Martin: Well thank you again and I want to thank you again for having me. In regards to getting the job, I'm very excited about it. It's a fun situation. [As for] settling in, outside of my family not being here, that part is hard. My children are still in California for another three weeks until they get out of school. But other than that, the staff and I have been hitting the ground running, building relationships with recruiting, and also with our fan base. So it's been a lot of fun.

HCH: Nine years ago, you sat down with the Hard Court Herald Newsletter and had a similar interview when you took the reins of Missouri State in the same position. Describe the journey back to the Show-Me-State and how you as a coach, are different today.

CM: When I took over the job at Missouri State, it was my first year as a coach. And we [as coaches] feel like we have all the answers as the assistant coaches, then we move over one seat. It's a totally different world, so just learning how to lead a program, understanding all the things that I learned as an assistant coach and trying to implement them within our system, all the stuff you have to do administrative-wise, and even thing within the community is different. As an assistant coach you're always behind the scenes, and now you're at the forefront, doing radio and TV interviews. You have to understand how to represent and market your brand. It's not just about you; it's about a program. So when you fast forward nine or ten years later, having awareness of my surroundings and understanding where I am, knowing how to be successful and what it takes to lead young men, and just knowing all the mistakes I've made over the course of nine years is important. All this is always changing with different guys and different players and programs. Things change: ups, downs, highs and lows. All that information I've gathered and learned over that time and here I am today. Hopefully, I've learned a lot from, not only the mistakes, but from the success.

HCH: Mizzou Men's Basketball has fallen on hard times as of late. How do you plan on changing the culture around the program and what does that culture look like?

CM: The winning part is understood, but we want to win at life. A couple of things we talk about are winning and being successful, not only on the court but in the classroom, as well as within the community. The other part we talk about is just doing your job to the best of your ability. Not just your everyday life, but your everyday walk. That's not necessarily when you step on the court, because I think that's a lifestyle. How do you leave your dorm room? Do you make your bed in the morning? Do you floss and brush your teeth morning and night? Those things sound simple and sound funny often times. When Coach [Gene] Keady used to say those things, we thought it was funny. But all the sudden, you're talking about 10-20 years later, you understood the translation and the correlation, on the court and off the court, and how they both go hand in

hand. Those are the things we try to teach: try to do right, try to live right, try to act right, and do your best.

HCH: You touched on it with describing the culture, but when you're recruiting, what type of characteristics do you look for in players that fit the culture you described?

CM: When we talk about players, of course talent is what it is. I think there are different forms of talent: here's a guy that's a great three-point shooter, here's a guy that can be a great defender, or here's a guy that's a great role guy. That's what you try and identify for a 13-man roster. A big guy that's a rebounder or a big guy that shoots threes. You want to have different types of guys, especially in today's game. Maybe 10 or 15 years ago, you could win with a big guy that stays inside and didn't really shoot threes, and were mostly rebounders. You could come down and score 50 points and win a game. But I think those days are long gone because of the way the game is officiated. So what we look for in a player is one that has a level of character, level of integrity, tries to be trustworthy, and works hard. I've never been one to judge a young man by where he comes from, whether he comes from a family of wealth or a family of low income, so those do not really matter. I've seen good and bad in both spectrums. For us, it's just trying to find the right guy to fit what we try to do and then have the desire to be good. Often times, you really don't know when you're talking about a young man when you first see him, when he's between the ages of 15 and 17. I'd like to think I'm a different guy at 45 then when I was 16 or 17. So my job is never 'try and judge a book by its cover' and to give every young man a chance to be successful and reveal himself in the most positive manner.

HCH: When you're trying to look for staff members, coaches, or even graduate assistants, because we have a lot of young people who want to get into college coaching or high school coaching, what kind of intangibles do you look for in those people?

CM: When we are talking about grad assistants and guys that want to be a part of our staff or coaching staff, there has to be integrity, character, and loyalty. It has to be there. If you don't have those things, it's hard for us to move forward. We can't get to the court, the X's and O's, teaching the game, and getting the community together as a family if you don't have the level of character, integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness. For me, I try to find that first. It's not so much a guy's skill package, like how smart he is. I'll take a guy with a level of loyalty over a tremendous amount of intelligence.

HCH: It didn't take long after your hire for Mizzou and its fans to start buzzing with excitement with the signing of number 1 national recruit, Michael Porter Jr., and top 25 recruit, Blake Harris. How excited are you about adding these two cornerstone pieces this early in your tenure?

CM: Very excited! You're talking about quality young guys and I think they want to be good players. They have desire to play in the NBA for a long time, but you know as well as I do, there's a lot of work that goes into that. But you're talking about good guys to be around. When we get to the court, we will have ups and downs and, as a coach, you push a young guy to play hard to get them out of their comfort zone. There will be rough patches and tough times. But that part is understood. I think both of those guys are good guys that want to be good players

and that have a passion for being a part of a good team. When you talk about Michael Porter Jr., he's done a really great job of selling and promoting the program. He has a passion for the state of Missouri, and he wants to see the state be successful and the University of Missouri a basketball program. And he's a kid; he doesn't owe the university that, but it means a lot to him. So when you have guys like that they have a passion and want to see the university be successful and get back to the level it used to be, that's fun to be a part of.

HCH: What sort of style should people expect to see when they watch Mizzou basketball play, even based on being around the team and the recruits early on?

CM: I think things that all programs want to defend and rebound. We have to do those things. They have to be a constant: defend, rebound, play hard, and play together. Now the areas we have to continue growing and getting better are opening the game up offensively. I think that's where the game has gone. It's trickled down from the NBA, but the way the NBA game is played and the way the college games are officiated now in the past few years has opened the game up where you get to the free throw line. Probably shoot a lot more three-point shots. I don't know if there are many games where a guy will use a back-to-the-basket post move where guys will get doubled, so we want to try and open things up to have spacing, and attack the rim. More importantly though, we want to share the basketball and have fun doing it, but we want to do it the right way.

HCH: Mizzou is, geographically, located in the center of the Show-Me-State. How do you intend on making Mizzou the center of basketball in Missouri and building a strong connection with local and statewide basketball programs?

CM: There are a lot of things that I can sit here and say. "We're gonna win" or "We're gonna win at a high level and have fun". I can say all of those things, but the truth of the matter is that winning on the floor solves a lot of issues. I think the excitement is great, but the bottom line is that you have to have success on the floor. You have to create an energy and a passion with these young guys. I think what happens is that fans want excitement, energy, passion, and they want to see winning. That part is understood. But I think when you talk about selling the program to recruits, they want to see, one: an opportunity to play from Day 1 with most young guys; two: they want to see excitement and energy, where they get to play their game, whatever that is; and three: to be put in a position to be a professional basketball player. So I think with all those things combined, you have a chance to be very successful. But you have to be genuine about that, and you have to be fair, and you have to be honest when assessing talent to give young guys opportunities.

HCH: Following the last question, what do you and your staff plan on doing to get better acquainted with high school coaches from around the state and building that relationship?

CM: This basketball program doesn't exist without the state of Missouri. The players and the coaches (high school and junior college) are needed for their support. Relationships have to be genuine. I've always been a guy that's tried to be real in those relationships, where it's not about their players. And I've tried to maintain those relationships. I've tried to be authentic in my approach, because, again, in this profession, you have ups, downs, highs, and lows. I've always been taught that you can be 'high on the hog' one day, but the next day, life can change for you.

So you have to have a level of humility, and I've always tried to be genuine with people, no matter if they're coaches, high school coaches, or summer coaches; it doesn't matter. Just being real, taking it one day at a time, and just building that 'win'. I think coaches should understand that we want to represent the state of Missouri in the right way. In order for us to be successful, we need the best players in the state of Missouri. Give us an opportunity to fight for them, and if we can do that, and get them into our program, we'll be successful and everybody will be happy.

HCH: The time constraints make balancing coaching and family time tougher and tougher, given it has become a full-time, year-long job for coaches who want to be great. As a coach in the major college basketball ranks and having the opportunity to take a job closer to your family, what advice would you have for our coaches who want to be leaders of young people, while balancing times with their families?

CM: When I was young assistant in the coaching profession, Coach Keady had me going from 7 a.m. until 9 or 10 at night. It wasn't a case of Coach demanding "Stay in the office and get this done. Don't leave!" But there was a lot of work to be done and a lot of learning to get done, so there were sacrifices. I don't want to make this sound so glamorous like I was at home at 9 a.m., eating breakfast with my kids and at 5 p.m., I was at home eating dinner with them; that wasn't the case. There was a lot of work put in. I missed a lot of dinners, plenty of breakfasts, and even missed my daughter's 1st birthday while I was out recruiting wherever I was at the time. I'm not even sure, but I know I missed her first birthday. That's not something I'm proud of, but it's the reality of what we are trying to do. We're trying to be the best, and there are sacrifices you make to be the best. I don't glamorize those things. When I'm in my office early or late at night, it's because I have to do it. I think starting out, you're trying to be the best and there's a compromise and a sacrifice, where you have to give some to get some. I think in order to get where you are trying to go, you have to put the time into it because it won't be easy.