

We Over Me RSSS

By Alan Stein, [Hardwood Hustle Blog](#) Check out his blog for several other thoughtful basketball coaching resource articles to share with your staffs and teams.

Two Great Exercises that every coach should do with his or her team...

A basketball coach's most difficult job is getting 15 individuals to fully acknowledge and embrace this fundamental concept:

We > Me

This is not an easy task.

Human beings are inherently selfish. We are programmed at a very early age to always look out for #1.

Trust me, I have 3 children under the age of 4 years old, and their entire existence is consumed by the concept of 'me.'

This is cute with toddlers, but not with basketball players.

Why?

Basketball is a team game, not an individual sport.

In order for a team to be as successful as it is capable of, each individual must sacrifice their own 'wants' for the betterment of the group.

It's not about what you want; it's about what the team needs. Powerful distinction.

Coach Jones recently conducted the following exercise with our varsity team at DeMatha:

In a private team meeting, he asked each of our 16 players to write on an index card the number of minutes they truly believed they deserved to play in each game this season. He then collected the cards and tallied the numbers up.

Like most high schools, we play a 32-minute game (4, 8-minute quarters) and are only allowed 5 players on the court at any given time. Therefore...

32 minutes X 5 players = 160 total game minutes

However, when Coach Jones tallied up the total number of minutes our players truly believed they deserved to play... it came to 276 total minutes.

I wasn't a statistics major, but even I can spot a colossal discrepancy.

So what does this mean?

It means most of the players on our team will not play as much as they would like.

He then replicated the exact same exercise with shots instead of minutes.

Last year our team averaged taking 52 shots per game.

When he polled our 16 players about how many shots they truly felt they earned the right to take each game... guess what the total was?

109 shots!

Déjà vu.

This simple exercise was a major eye opener. It gave our coaching staff tremendous insight into just how important it is going to be for us to create a 'We > Me' culture.

In fact, this concept will define our season.

If we can successfully get all 16 of players to buy in to the fact that it is not about their minutes or the shots they take... we have a chance to be really, really good this year. We have championship caliber talent. But do we have championship caliber unselfishness? Only time will tell.

A vast majority of the time, if a player does not buy into this concept... they start worrying about 'me'... and feel like they should be playing more...

This mindset is a cancer to your team is absolutely, positively unacceptable.

It is understandable to want more playing time.

It is understandable to want to take more shots.

Just because something is understandable doesn't mean it is acceptable.

Just because you want it doesn't mean it's what's best for the team.

It takes a very special player to admit...

It's not about me; it's about us.

I challenge you to be special.

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