

Well Coached Basketball Teams Part 2 RSSS

Well Coached teams players have positive body language: No poor reactions coming of the court after a substitution, no back talking a coach/teammate/official, no slumping of shoulders on the bench, no looking in stands during a time out, no throwing water bottles/towels/warm-ups at managers... With well coached teams it's difficult to tell whether they are winning or losing games without looking at scoreboard.

Well Coached teams have a distinct "language" that they speak: Terminology is consistent from player to player and coach to coach. Areas of the floor are called the same thing. Screening actions have a vocabulary. Offensive actions are consistent. Consistent use of terminology breeds confidence and as a result performance levels are impacted.

Well Coached teams follow the game in general and respect it's past, present, and future: We can all spot a basketball junkie a mile away by the way they speak about the game. Well Coached players know their opponents by name and/or number, they know the historical significance of their former teams, and they know the history of the game they love to play.

Well Coached teams have players who take care of academics equal to athletics: This isn't saying that every player is straight A, Deans List student. Just that they manage their books as well as their ball.

Well Coached teams make adjustments to what other teams are doing against them: We've all faced those teams who come out of a timeout or halftime with a slight change in their tactics that completely change the momentum of the game and sometime the overall outcome.

Well coached teams display qualities of passion, discipline, selflessness, respect, perspective, courage, leadership, responsibility, resilience, imagination: These qualities come from Bill Bradley's book on Values of the Game. They are all true and each comes with many different definitions and application.

Well coached teams have a consistent player rotation that always seems to place each player in a position to contribute effectively: This thought illustrates another favorite quote of "don't take ducks to eagle school"... well coached teams have coaches who have their players in the right spot at the right time more than most. They don't ask a non-shooter to hit a three to win the game. They don't have a non-rebounder in the game on defense to win. They don't have their EAGLES sitting beside them at crunch time Well coached teams don't foul when the ball is away from scoring area: Although this is not a NEVER instance, well coached teams don't repeatedly do this putting teams in bonus earlier in half than necessary and creating foul troubles later on in game.

To me the hardest thing about coming up with a philosophy or a definition is that there are so many factors to consider and rarely can you point to one thing being an ABSOLUTE. Maybe it is the scientific thinking background I was born with or my love for court room movie drama's, but I have always been a "prove it to me" type coach. Show me some evidence. Present a case with the evidence.

So, I began taking the examples of WELL COACHED one by one to find a well coached team. Teams that DID NOT have that particular quality but was still WELL COACHED. For example, our current team has four seniors who have won 4 consecutive A10 titles and I am almost embarrassed sometimes at the lack of intensity it seems we have in pre-game warm-ups. Yet they bring it every single night come tip-off.

The UCONN Huskies who recently just ended a record 90 game winning streak that included back-to-back NCAA Championships and are obviously WELL COACHED, came out of a timeout in a recent game with a short

shot clock and didn't recognize in time to get a shot off.

Watching an SEC men's game last night with a coaching screaming to foul on the floor with a three point lead before a player could shoot, I see the team NOT do what he was yelling and the opposing player hits a three to send into overtime at the buzzer. They end up losing by double digits in double OT.

I believe you can find examples of teams everyone would agree are WELL COACHED that rarely, if ever, exhibit certain qualities that we all would agree are indicators of actually being WELL COACHED. So is this a question that has no answer???

Maybe so. Maybe the answer is like Coach Wooden says... A lot of answers.

Who knows, but I can tell you that through the years of thinking about this and observing it, I have been able to find two characteristics that all WELL COACHED teams do have. They may be displayed in different ways. They may be held accountable in different ways. They may be perceived in different ways. But in my eyes all WELL COACHED teams have these two.

1) WELL COACHED teams have players who have surrendered to the culture of their program.

2) WELL COACHED teams have identifiable standards of excellence on the court.

To me most the things we have already mentioned can be reworded to fit into one of these two categories in some shape form or fashion... but these two things sum it all up the best in my mind.

Players who have surrendered to their culture have let go of the things that make them uncoachable. They have surrendered their personal feelings to put their trust in their teams and their coaches. They have surrendered their defense mechanisms for the betterment of the team. They have surrendered their fear of being uncool in teammates eyes for being cool in their coaches eyes. They have surrendered their inadequacies to be part of team that has each other's back. They have surrendered the personal time for team time. They have surrendered distracting relationships for healthy relationships. They have surrendered negative thoughts for positive outlooks. They have surrendered the input of family/friends for constructive criticism of coaches/teammates.

Teams who have an immediate identifiable standard of play... it may be toughness, execution, enthusiasm, speed, power, athleticism, tenacity. Teams you know are going to either guard you from the time you get off the bus or have a hand in your face every time you shoot. Teams that are going to share the ball so well that you can't key on one player. Teams who have players that are listening to their coach even if their eyes or body language might suggest they aren't. Teams with players who are consistent in their "swagger". Teams that are going to get the ball into their star's hands so often you can't defend them. Teams who are going to be so prepared that they are calling out actions in your offense the second a coach signals a play call. Teams who can be summed up in a few words on a scouting report but be impossible to defeat come game time. Teams who's standard of play is synonymous with the name on the front of their jersey regardless of who's name is on the back of their jersey. Teams who are who they are every single night.

Those players are WELL COACHED. Those teams are WELL COACHED.