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Head Coach Mike Krzyzewski speaks to the players after a scrimmage during USA Senior Mens National Team practice

Ten Qualities of a Successful Coach

By Steve Pavlovic, Basketball Coaches Coordinator
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Whether coaching a child's youth team, a junior high school team, a high school team, or a college team, coaches require the same kind of qualities to be successful.

In my 22 years of coaching youth sports, I believe I can list the 10 qualities that will assure success on both the coaching and playing levels.

#1 PATIENCE

The younger the players, the more patience you must have. You cannot expect everyone to latch on to the skill being taught at the same time. Your challenge will be to get them to

pay attention to you and follow your instructions. For those who don't, you must leave a reminder of the reason they are there.

#2 DISCIPLINE

In addition to patience, you must also maintain control of the team. You don't want anyone goofing around and distracting the rest of the team. Sure, everyone wants to have fun. But the main objective is to learn how to play the sport.

For those who are misbehaving, you can add extra drills or talk with their parents about their behavior. You must take control of the situation immediately—letting the players

know that you will not tolerate disobedience.

If you don't take control, your players are not going to take your discipline seriously. I don't mean that you have to be a tyrant. Just let them know what you expect of them, namely their attention and effort, and stay consistent.

#3 BE FAIR

Treat everyone on your team equally. Team rules are meant for everyone, not just some players. The quickest way to cause dissension is to let one player get away with something, and then punish another who has done the same thing.

Even if the player is your child, he or she must follow the same rules as everyone else: We have no stars on the team. Everyone receives the same treatment. Treat them all the same, whether complimenting them or correcting them, and you will earn the respect of all of them.

#4 COMMITMENTS

When you decide to become a coach, you are making a commitment to a team. A team that is depending on you and looking at you as its leader and resident "expert" on the sport.

Don't let them down! Show that you are committed to them by always being at practice, being enthusiastic, and showing concern for their development.

Always follow your own rules. When you tell the players to be at a practice or game at a certain time, make sure you are also there on time.

I always try to show up at least 20 minutes early. Being on time is a practice that will be useful to everyone throughout his or her lives. Show them that it is important to you, too. If you are consistently late, your players will begin thinking, "If coach isn't on time, why should I be?" Show that you are committed to the entire team by doing as you say.

