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Sedem strategij za dolgoletno kariero treniranja

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Trenerji z dolgoletno kariero treniranja so se naučili soočati s stresom in ovirami ter uporabljati različne strategije za izboljšanje. 25 let izkušenj Andyja Carrierja na področju treniranja košarke na majhni fakulteti za umetnost, nam ponuja vpogled v naslednjih sedem strategij, ki lahko služijo tudi kot dober začetek za izgradnjo dolgotrajne trenerske kariere.

1. Ugotovi svojo identiteto

Dokaj pogosta praksa je, da trenerji začnejo svojo trenersko pot po zaključeni športni karieri. Medtem, ko so že pridobili svojo identiteto kot igralci, se njihova trenerska identiteta šele razvija. Da pridobimo identiteto, pa se moramo namerno vprašati kdo smo in izhajati iz različnih izkušenj.

“Delal sem za tri trenerje iz dvorane slavnih,” pravi Carrier. “Eden je bil ‘trener igralcev’, ki je bil tako blizu svojim sedanjim, kot prejšnjim igralcem, da je bil vpleten v njihovo življenje tudi izven igrišča. Drugi je uporabljal avtoritativni način vodenja, s katerim je igralce postavljaj pred veliko izzivov in si včasih pomagal tudi z grožnjami. Tretji pa je bil zelo poslovno naravnani. Ni ustvarjal le odnose z igralci ampak je igralce postavljaj tudi pred izzive s konstantnimi evalvacijami nastopov in rezultatov.”

“Ko sem jaz postal trener, se nisem trudil biti nihče od teh treh. Če nisi pristen, igralci to opazijo in lahko hitro izgubiš svojo kredibilnost. Strateško sem uporabil delčke vseh treh trenerjev za katere sem delal in jih uporabil na način, da so sovpadali z mojo osebnostjo.”

Da bi se naučili in evalvirali svoje trenerske izkušnje, si moramo vzeti čas za refleksijo treninga. Refleksivni trening je namerni poizkus, da se vprašamo, ovrednotimo in ocenimo treninge in tekmovanja. Tak postopek pogosto vsebuje podrobno dokumentacijo zavestnega in doslednega dela dnevne rutine.

“Opazoval bi, kako se igralci in ostali sodelavci odzivajo na moje vodenje in bi se vsako jutro vprašal, kdo moram postati danes, da pri njih dosežem pozitivno naravnost za doseganje zelenih rezultatov.”

Med procesom refleksije, trenerji ugotovijo kako njihovo ravnanje vpliva na druge in s tem dobro spoznajo samega sebe.

2. Najdi svoje mesto

Trenerji pogosto strmijo k stopnji športa na katerem so nekoč sami igrali, a se moramo zavedati, da se nam priložnosti lahko ponudijo na vseh nivojih. Vsak nivo potrebuje različni repertoar pri ukvarjanju s fizičnim in mentalnim razvojem igralcev, z administrativnih zadolžitvami, s starši, z organizacijo ekipe in s tekmovalno strategijo. En pristop pri ugotavljanju svojega mesta je, da ugotovimo kakšen pogled na šport ima vodstvo, kakšno vlogo igra šport pri akademski uspešnosti in kakšen je status športa na fakulteti, med zaposlenimi, študenti in okoljski skupnosti. Potrebno je raziskati, kakšni so cilji, pričakovanja, resursi in dodatne zadolžitve trenerja na posamezni instituciji.

“Poznal sem tip študentov-igralcev, ki jih imamo na šoli in tip študentov-igralcev, ki so uspešni v šoli, kakršni je bila naša,” pravi Carrier. “Vedel sem tudi kakšne so dodatne zadolžitve, ki jih trenerji morajo narediti na tem nivoju, vključno z učenjem in odgovornostjo na fakulteti. Bil sem predan tem zadolžitvam in v tem sem tudi užival. Vedno sem verjel, da je tudi šport del našega šolanja.”

Trenerji, ki so uspeli zgraditi dolgoročno kariero, niso osredotočeni le razvijanju svojega znanja temveč tudi razvijanju njihovega športnega programa.

3. Opredeli svoj uspeh

Ukvarjanje s športom lahko privede do veliko koristi, med njimi tudi razvijanje atletskih sposobnosti in socialne interakcije. Veliko trenerjev želi imeti pozitiven vpliv na igro in bolj pomembno, na življenje njihovih igralcev. Ampak v tekmovalnem športu je rezultat pogosto pokazatelj uspešnosti trenerja. Kar pomeni, da je težko oceniti uspeh trenerja drugače, kot z zmago. Ta pritisk trenerju pogosto povzroči izgubo fokusa in žrtvuje dolgoročnost za kratkoročni rezultat. Priznani trenerji verjamejo, da obstajajo standardi večji od zmage, ki ne bi smeli biti zanemarjeni. Nekatere odločitve mogoče ne bi pripeljale do želene takojšnje zmage, ampak bi na daljši rok omogočile trenerju, da doseže več.

“Nikoli ne bi ogrozil svoje integritete za zmago košarkarske tekme,” pravi Carrier. “Nikoli ne bi goljufal ali poslal v igro igralce, kateri ne smejo igrati. Vedno sem bil ponosen, da sem spoznal duh in namen pravil v športu in vedno bi vodil z vzgledom. Nikoli tudi ne bi ogrožal varnosti in zdravja naših igralcev. Če so bili poškodovani in bi lahko igranje povzročilo dolgoročne zdravstvene posledice, jih enostavno ne bi poslal na igrišče.”

Refleksija je lahko zelo močna vaja, da te ohrani na začrtani poti in v ravnovesju. Izogibaj se privlačnosti kratkoročnega razmišljanja s konstantnimi opozarjanji o ogledovanju celotne slike. Razmišljaj kakšne karakteristike in lastnosti si želiš, da bi tvoji študentje-igralci osvojili, ko končajo svojo športno pot. Četudi cilji vsebujejo zmage, izobrazbo ali pa nekatere osebne lastnosti, je pomembno, da si te cilje nekam zapišeš, da jih bodo igralci videli in jih tudi upoštevali.

“Vsakemu igralcu sem povedal, da si iskreno želim, da opravi šolanje in postane samostojen,” pravi Carrier. “Kako igralci predstavljajo sebe, naš program in našo šolo je veliko bolj pomembno od česar koli kar bodo naredili na igrišču. Mnogi so prvič razumeli, da so postali del nečesa večjega kot so oni sami.”

4. Neguj trajne odnose

Kako trener zaznava njegovo vlogo pri vodenju njegovih študentov-igralcev, pogosto narekuje pot pri izgradnji dolgotrajnih skupnih odnosov. Če trener verjame, da je cilj trenerja asistiranje pri izgradnji vseh aspektov igralčevega življenja, je to dobra podlaga za izgradnjo dobrih odnosov med trenerjem in igralcem. Če pa trener verjame, da je cilj zmagovati na tekmah, pa je njihov odnos lahko kaj hitro ogrožen.

Trenerji morajo postaviti prvi korak pri ugotovitvi kaj in kdo je pomemben v igralčevem življenju, le tako se ponudijo priložnosti, da trener nekaj izve o svojem igralcu.

Bodi pozoren, poslušaj in opazuj verbalne in neverbalne znake. Vzemi si čas za vsakega igralca.

“Moraš si želeto spoznati svoje igralce, govoriti z njimi in ugotoviti kje so v njihovem življenju,” pravi Carrier. “Čas je zlata vreden in imel boš veliko zadolžitev. Ampak, prioriteta mora biti, da si vzameš čas in dobro spoznaš svoje igralce. Vedno sem vedel, da je to pomembno, a sem skozi leta na tem področju tudi sam napredoval. Tekom moje kariere sem spoznal, da se nikoli ni šlo za mene. Vedno se je šlo za igralce in za ekipo. Če igralci vedo, da ti ni vseeno za njih, se bodo zate borili na igrišču.”

Ko trener vzpostavi dobro navezo med igralci, lahko prosi za povratne informacije. Povratne informacije lahko zbiramo s pogovorom ena na ena ali s pogovorom s celotno ekipo. Imamo pa tudi izbiro anonimnih povratnih informacij.

“Vedno sem planiral samostojne sestanke z igralci: preden se je sezona začela, vsaj enega med sezono in na koncu sezone,” pravi Carrier. “Pogovarjali smo se o košarki, o razredih, o življenju na kampusu in o njihovem družinskem življenju. Vsak igralec je po sezoni izpolnil vprašalnik o njihovih najboljših in najslabših dosežkih, o najljubših in najslabših vajah na treningu, kaj bi spremenili in kaj bi izboljšali, da bi bili še bolj uspešni. Vključili smo tudi njihove cilje za delo v

pripravljalnem obdobju in s kakšnim delom bi jih dosegli. Res je, da se igralci na sestankih pogovarjajo s teboj vendar lahko dobiš boljše povratne informacije če stvari zapišejo na papir.” Skozi proces povratnih informacij se bo odnos z igralcem izboljšal in pojavile se bodo priložnosti pomagati na poti do uspeha.

5. Pomagaj ostalim doseči uspeh

Namerno se poizkusi povezati z igralci in ugotovi kaj si želijo doseči. Vsak igralce ima različne notranje in zunanje cilje. Bolje kot trener ve koga trenira, večja je možnost, da bo lahko vplival na svoje igralce. Igralci se bodo trenerju težko zaupali, če ne bodo sproščeni ob njegovi prisotnosti.

“Pogosto pravim, ‘Pomagaj drugim dobiti kar želijo in dobil boš kar želiš.’” pravi Carrier. “Spoštuj proces treniranja mladih športnikov. Delali bodo napake. Vskoči in pokaži, da ti ni vseeno ko nekdo trpi ali ko rabi nekoga, da ga pobere iz dna. Ljudje si pogosto ne zapomnijo kaj jim poveš, zapomnijo pa si kako so se počutili, ko so bili poleg tebe. Bodi iskren in naj ti ne bo vseeno za njih in za njihov uspeh.”

6. Vzpostavi ravnovesje med delom in življenjem

Veliko odgovornosti in družinsko življenje lahko kar hitro vpliva na trenerjevo sposobnost držanja življenja v ravnovesju. Dobra vaja za trenerja je, da oceni katero karakteristiko najbolj ceni. S pravilnim identificiranjem in ovrednotenjem vrednot po njihovi pomembnosti, lahko trener presodi katera področja življenja so bolj pomembna od drugih. Zelo pa je tudi pomembno, da se trenerji občasno odklopijo od dela in najdejo pravo razmerje med delom in življenjem.

“Uživam v naravi in v ribolovu,” pravi Carrier. “Lahko bi rekli, da je to moja terapija. Spraznim svojo glavo in pridobim perspektivo. Ko se vrnem nazaj na delo, se počutim prenovljeno in moja perspektiva je boljša. Lahko delaš veliko, a včasih je potrebno delati pametno in držati ravnovesje v življenju. Ne bodi usmerjen samo na eno stvar, sicer boš hitro pregorel.”

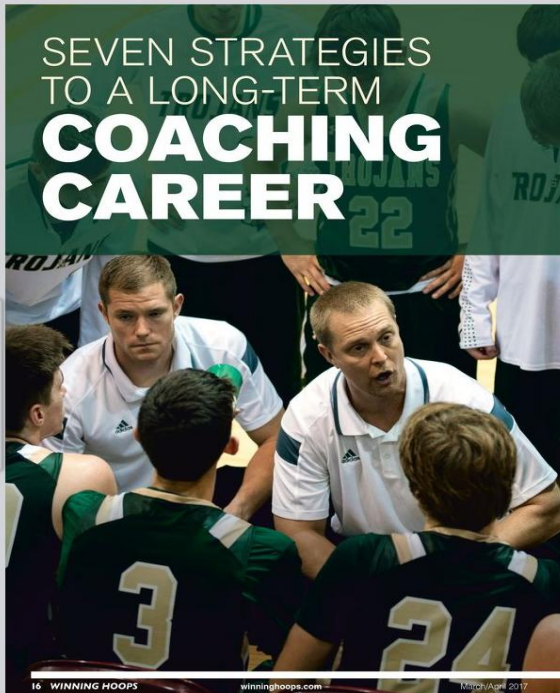
7. Nadaljuj z učenjem

Ključ do dolgoletne trenerske kariere je verjetno povezan s trenerjevo sposobnostjo ostajati z novosti in slediti spremembam v njegovem športu, a vseeno ostati v skladu s svojimi prepričanji. Čeprav je želja po znanju samomotivirana, mora biti končni rezultat tvojega treninga vedno fokusiran na zahteve tvojih igralcev in dolgoročnega procesa izpopolnjevanja svojih znanj.

“Trenerji morajo poiskati način adaptiranja, pri katerem ne spremenijo kdo so,” pravi Carrier.

“Danes mladi igrajo več iger kot nekoč in dobijo veliko manj navodil o osnovah igre. To je spremenilo način mojega treniranja. Ko so prišli na naše treninge, nisem vzel nič za samoumevno. Začeli smo z osnovami igre in se le tem posvetili večino časa na treningih.”

Pot do dolgoletne trenerske kariere je polna izzivov, ki so edinstveni vsakemu posameznemu trenerju. Trenerji lahko uporabljajo mnogo metod kako se s temi izzivi spoprijeti. Teh sedem strategij ponuja eno perspektivo trenerja, ki je dosegel svojo pot dolgoletne trenerske kariere.



SEVEN STRATEGIES TO A LONG-TERM COACHING CAREER

By Pete Van Mullen & Andy Carrier

Coaches that reach longevity in coaching have learned to deal with stress, obstacles and implement improvement strategies. Using Andy Carrier's experience as the men's basketball coach at a small liberal arts college for 25 years, these seven strategies offer insight into building a long-term coaching career.

1 Establish your identity. It's common practice that many coaches begin their careers upon completion of their playing career. While they may have established an identity as an athlete, their identity as a coach is still developing. To establish your identity, make a deliberate attempt to be more self-aware and glean from a variety of experiences. "I worked for three hall of fame basketball coaches," Carrier said. "One was a players coach, he was very close to his current and former players and involved in their lives beyond basketball. One used an authoritarian leadership style, the student-athletes basically felt challenged and even threatened at times. The third coach was businesslike. He was not very close to the players but challenged them, constantly evaluating them on performance and results." "When I became a head coach I did not try to be any of them. You have to be authentic or players and people will see through you and you lose credibility. Strategically, I used bits and pieces from each of the coaches I worked for to fit my personality." To learn and evaluate your experiences as a coach, make time for reflective practice. Reflective practice is a deliberate attempt to question, evaluate and assess daily routines, practices and competitions. The process often involves detailed documentation or a conscious, consistent reflective period in the day. "I would observe how players and constituents were responding to me," Carrier said, "and each morning I

would ask myself, 'Who do I need to be today, to make a positive difference for them, to get the results we desire?'" During the reflective process, coaches learn how their actions impact others and they gain a greater understanding of who they are.

Established coaches believe that there are standards greater than victory that should never be compromised.

2 Find your fit. While it's common for coaches to gravitate to a level of sport they played at, opportunities present themselves at all levels. Each requires a unique skill set in dealing with the physical and mental developmental stages of student-athletes, administrative responsibilities, parents, team management and game strategy. "One approach in finding your fit is to examine how the current administration views athletics, what role athletics plays in the academic achievement, and the perception of athletics amongst faculty, staff, students and the community. Examine the differing goals, expectations, resources and additional job duties required of the coach at that institution. "I knew the clientele and the type of student-athlete we serve and the type of student-athlete that thrives and is successful in schools like ours," Carrier said. "I also knew the additional duties that coaches needed to take on at this level, including teaching and faculty responsibilities. I was committed to those responsibilities and enjoyed that part of the job. I have always believed athletics is an integral part of our total education process."

Coaches who have established longevity focus on developing not only their expertise but growing their program. They take a long-term approach to building a career.

3 Define success. There are many benefits for participating in sport, including skill development and social interaction. Many coaches want to have a positive impact on the game and, more importantly, the young people they work with. However, in competitive sport, the scoreboard often measures the success of a coach. This makes it difficult to view success as anything other than winning, and that pressure may force a coach to lose focus and sacrifice longevity for immediate results.

Established coaches believe that there are standards greater than victory that should never be compromised. Some decisions might not lead to immediate success, but in the long run they allow the coach to reach greater heights. "I would never compromise my integrity to win a basketball game," Carrier said. "I would never cheat, break rules or play ineligible players. I always pride myself to learn the spirit and intent of rules and lead by example. Also, I would never risk the health or safety of our players. If they were hurt and participation might have long-term implications, there was no second-guessing—we didn't play them."

Reflection can be a powerful exercise in keeping you on track and in balance. Avoid the lure of short-range thinking by continually reminding yourself to look at the bigger picture. Consider what characteristics and traits you want student-athletes to demonstrate once they end their playing career. Whether the goals involve winning, academics or character development, provide a written template for student-athletes to follow. "I told every player how sincere and committed I was to them earning a degree, as well as who they were as



Prioritizing student-athlete development over winning can help coaches build a fulfilling career in sports.

people," Carrier said. "How they represented themselves, our program and our school were more important than anything they would ever do on the court. It was the first time for many of them that they understood they were a part of something bigger than themselves."

4 Cultivate lasting relationships. How a coach perceives his or her role in leading student-athletes often dictates their approach in cultivating long-term relationships. If the coach believes the purpose is to assist student-athletes in growing all aspects of their lives, then the groundwork for strong coach-athlete relationships is established. If the coach views their primary role as winning games, then relationship development may be compromised. Coaches must initiate the first step in learning what's important and who's important to each individual student-athlete to find opportunities to connect. Pay attention, listen and be observant to verbal and non-verbal cues. Take time to engage with student-athletes. "You need to get to know them, talk to them and meet them where they are in their lives," Carrier said. "Time is

precious and you will have a lot of demands. Yet you need to make this a priority and not compromise spending time getting to know your players. I always cared, but evolved. I realized as my career went along, it was never about me. It was always about them and the team. If they know you care, they will knock themselves out for you as their coach." Once a coach establishes a strong connection, he or she can ask for feedback. Feedback can be gathered in direct one-on-one conversation or in a group setting. Anonymous feedback also is an option. "I always scheduled individual meetings with players before the season started, at least one during the season and at the end of the season," Carrier said. "We talked basketball, classes, campus life and their families. I had each player fill out a post-season survey on their best and worst part of the season, their favorite and least favorite drills, what they would change, and what would make us more successful. We included their goals for the off-season and the actions they would take to accomplish them. They will talk to you in the meetings, but if you have them write things down, you will get much better feedback."

Through the feedback process, you will strengthen the bond with student-athletes and create opportunities to help them achieve success.

5 Help others achieve success. Make a deliberate attempt to engage with student-athletes and identify what they want to achieve. Each student-athlete is motivated by different external and internal factors. The better a coach understands who they are coaching, the more likely they are to influence the student-athletes. It will be difficult for student-athletes to share with you if they do not feel comfortable in your presence. "I often said, 'Help others get what they want and you will get what you want,'" Carrier said. "Be respectful of the development process of young adults. They are going to make mistakes. Step in and show your concern when someone is struggling or think they may need someone to pick them up. People will not always remember what you said to them, but they will always remember how you made them feel when they were with you. Be sincere, and care about them and their success."

6 Establish work-life balance. Multiple responsibilities and family lives can quickly impact a coach's ability to maintain a balanced lifestyle. A good exercise for coaches is to reflect on what they value. By clearly identifying values and prioritizing them in order of importance, coaches can recognize what areas of their lives receive precedence over others. It's also important for coaches to find time to get away and develop work-life balance. "I love the outdoors and love fishing," Carrier said. "You could say I was my therapy. I could clear my mind and gain perspective. When I went back to work, I was refreshed and my perspective was much better. You can work hard but also need to work smart and balance your life. Do not be one-dimensional or you will burn out quick."

7 Continue learning. The key to developing a long-term career is likely contingent on the coach's ability to keep

up with changes in his or her sport while staying true to what they believe in. Even though your efforts to learn are self-motivated, the end result of your training should be focused on the needs of the student-athletes and a long-term approach to improving in your craft.

"Coaches must find ways to adapt without changing who they are," Carrier said. "Today, young people are playing more games than ever before and probably getting less instruction on the fundamentals. This changed the way I coached. I didn't take anything for granted when we came into our program. We started with and spent more time in practice on the fundamentals." The path to a long-term career is filled with many challenges unique to each coach. Coaches can utilize a variety of methods and resources to meet the challenges they encounter. These seven strategies offer one perspective from a coach that found his own path to a long-term coaching career.



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