

Success Tips

By Jay Monahan

Courtesy of Hoop Champs, Inc. (www.hoopchamps.com)

As part of the offerings of Hoop Champs, Inc., one of the Chapters in the Playbook is simply called “Tips for Success” and many of the “tips” presented by Coach Jay Monahan will equate to points on the floor. Here is a synopsis of the 16 Tips presented in that Chapter...

1. EXPLOIT YOUR OPPONENTS SUBSTITUTIONS

Coaching Substitutions ...exploit your opponent's substitution!

Far too often coaches don't take advantage of the opponent's substitution. Think about it, when that 6th man, 7th, or 8th man comes into the game - they are so consumed with proving themselves that they can actually work themselves out of position on the defensive end of the court. What's going through that player's mind (the sub)? He is so committed to not allowing his man to score. He wants to prove to his coach that he can keep his man from scoring. This “tip” walks you through how to get “free” points several times throughout each game!

2. HELP YOUR BREAK-DOWN DRILLS BE MORE INTENSE - - - ADD MUSIC

We start each and every practice with a team stretch, followed by an abdominal workout, immediately followed by approximately 20 minutes of breakdown drills for skills. We have a sound system in our main gymnasium and everyday, the beginning of practice until we finish our drills, we have music playing. It was an easy scientific study. Take away the music and the level of Intensity of the drills without music is noticeably less. The kids love it. It's fun and you guessed it - they work harder. Note: This doesn't mean that we aren't fundamental in our drills and working hard every minute on the court. It just means the pain is less and the level of enthusiasm is greater. Try it and you too will be pleased with the results.

3. CREATE PRACTICE SCHEDULES THAT COVER MORE THAN YOUR ALLOTTED TIME

Practice schedules - to optimizing court time. Have a schedule of very specific events that must happen during that given day to help you reach your team goals. Make your assistant coaches accountable. I look at our team as having 2 head coaches. My assistants, even volunteer assistants have very clear expectations from me along with tremendous responsibility. Examples of "practice schedules" are provided along with this "tip".

4. USE TEAM GUIDELINES RATHER THAN TEAM RULES

Team Guidelines - provide behavioral guidelines, not rules. We are dealing with young adults in the high school level and they need to understand priorities, which will apply to not only the game of basketball, but all aspects of life as well. It has been very successful in our program and our Team Guidelines that are the first two pages of our play book for each of our players...Our Team Guidelines are provided for you in this "tip" and the support a common theme of "DISCIPLINE EQUALS FREEDOM".

5. MAKE YOUR TIME-OUTS MEAN SOMETHING AND YOUR OPPONENT'S MEAN NOTHING

The majority of the time an opposing coach calls a time-out because your team is extremely effective at a particular aspect of the game. Let's hope it's every aspect. Often, our pressure defense causes opposing coaches to get that needed Time Out. My assumption is that they are drawing up something to counter what we've been doing that's effective. My thought is to never come out of a time-out showing the very thing that caused him to burn a time-out. This sounds so minor, but there is always a battle going on with coaches in a game. The battle can even be in the subconscious, but it's a real psychological advantage for your team if you can win that battle. You'll gain confidence in your coaching tactics to the point where you will even be more precise in your view of the battle-taking place on the hardwood. Your adjustments will be keen and your insight almost prophetic just because you are winning that game off of the floor that takes place on the bench. I've actually had coaches literally stop coaching because every adjustment made during the game our counter kept the momentum and their players on the floor lost their leadership and faith from their leader on the bench.

6. INVOLVE YOUR TEAM IN THE TEAM DECISIONS

Coordinate your players into team decisions. Be a facilitator. You can facilitate the players into the decision you think are best for the players and the team. Give them options and take their input and value it. They may present to you better alternatives than you have considered. Bottom line is the players truly appreciate that opportunity. Most importantly, they players feel as if they own the decision and will respect it even more because it's theirs. This simple technique will get you miles and miles out of your players. Try it and you'll see how well they respond to it.

7. COMMUNICATE ON THE COURT, NON-VERBALLY

Use Non-verbal reads in your out-of-bound plays, in certain defensive sets and also calling your offensive sets. In our out of bounds plays, we'd run three different plays out of each of several different sets, but our opponents never knew how we were calling them. Sounds too simple to make a big difference, but it does! Countless different examples are given throughout this great "tip"!

8. ATTITUDE is EVERYTHING... and it's contagious!

I'm a tremendous believer in stressing the positive as opposed to stressing the negative. Life is so much more enjoyable if you look at the full side of the cup. Build this positive approach into your coaching philosophies. Not only will you see your players respond to it with their elevated work ethic, which directly impacts their performance on the court, but this is the one concept you, as a coach, want your players to take with them and apply it to everything in life. This "tip" is filled with examples of several very small things that I truly believe make an incredible difference in our players.

9. ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT THINGS TO DO AS A COACH... COACHING MOMENTUM

Coaching momentum. The game's outcome in equally matched teams is often determined by this intangible. It's difficult, but it can be coached. So how do we coach momentum. This "tip" goes into great detail of many ways that you can gain that edge on one of the game's largest intangibles – coaching momentum and winning the all important game of MOMENTUM!

10. TEACH THE DIFFICULT TO TEACH

Two pet peeves:

- 1). Backing off of the crazy shot
- 2). Proper shot blocking techniques

Be relentless. This also can equate to four to six points per game. Our players hear this year round from me. I've actually conditioned them to the point where it is not only understood, it's built into our philosophy. It's the little tiny things in life that make such a TREMENDOUS difference.

11. POST MOVES HAVE YOUR GUARD SCORING FROM THE POST

We have all of our guards work on post moves just as we have our post player's work on their ball handling. So what's different or special? Here's the deal. Stay with me on this. We do a lot of scoring with our guards in the post. How much time do coaches spend with their post players teaching them how to defend post moves? The answer is quite simple... the vast majority of coaches spend very little time, if any, teaching post players how to defend post moves on the block.

So what happens if a 6'0" point guard ends up isolated in the low post with a 5'10" guard defending him?. Now the question remains... How often do you think coaches are spending practice time with their guards working on how to defend post moves? We've come to learn that the answer is actually close to NONE. This "tip" will explain to you exactly how you can score as many as six to eight points per game, with some innovative sets, that takes advantage of a scoring guard with post moves. TRY THIS!!

12. LEVERAGE SCOUTING REPORTS & AUTOMATE YOUR PROGRAM

I'm sure you are serious about PREPARATION for your program. Well, I attribute so much of our success because we are so much better prepared for our opponent than they are for us. Our players gain such a tremendous competitive advantage because mentally, both psychologically and even subconsciously, we know we've got 'em even before the tip-off. This "tip" goes into great detail about leveraging technology to make your scouting both easy and productive. Sample scouting reports are provided for you as well.

13. THE PROPER WAY TO LEVERAGE FILMS WITH YOUR PLAYERS

Optimize both your time, but especially your players' time with proper utilization of films. It's the coaching staff's accountability to spend countless hours in front of a recorder reviewing films in order to develop scouting reports, game plans and certainly learn about your own players. When I bring the student athletes into the team room for film review, it's well prepared and well orchestrated. I have the film marked at specific parts by the counter of the tape to identify short clips to demonstrate our upcoming opponent's weaknesses that we are going to exploit. I'll go to a specific spot on the film to show a strength of our opponent to point out how we'll combat that strength.

I also respect my player's time, because I know that their time is as precious as mine. They have to maintain excellent grades to achieve their goals and the last thing I want to do as a coach is waste their time watching games from beginning to end. How boring!! The time should be optimal in the spirit of learning the game of basketball and to gain an edge on our opponent. 'Nough said.

14. HOW TO OPTIMIZE THE USE OF PLAYBOOKS

Play books: Why? How? When? How to utilize them to optimize your court time?

Every player in our program gets a playbook in the beginning of the year, which grows in size as the season progresses. The playbook contains our Team Guidelines, phone trees, schedules of both practice and games, and so on. The most optimal use of playbooks for the players is the way we learn new set plays. Rather than introducing the players to a new play on the court, I simply give it to them the end of practice the night prior to us putting the play in. The players should put the play in the appropriate section of their playbook and know the play prior to practice. This literally saves us 20 minutes time staging the play and explaining all of the responsibilities. Instead, our court time is spent on working on timing, floor spacing and execution. It's just a TREMENDOUS TIME SAVER!

Organization is critical to success! Our play books are critical to our getting so much accomplished in such limited time.

15. DESIGN YOUR PROGRAM TO BE MOST DIFFICULT TO SCOUT

Design your program to make it almost impossible to appropriately scout. With the proper time management skills and use of your playbooks, you can get a TREMENDOUS amount not only accomplished, but also learned and comprehended. You can literally build an arsenal of plays to attack your opponents with while improving your fundamentals daily. This tip give you great examples even down to the game sheet with defines the arsenal of all offenses, defenses, presses, OB Plays known by all players at that point and time of the year!

16. PROMOTE YOUR PLAYERS TO COLLEGES

In this day of automation and computers, it really makes our job easy to promote our players who have the ability to play at the next level. In eight years of coaching, we've had 13 players have opportunities created to go on to play at the next level ranging from all levels of the NCAA, NAIA down through one player who was recruited by one of the best 2-year Technical Institutions on the east coast.

Certainly it takes time, but that time is valued in so many different ways. It had been over 20 years that any player from our school had gone onto any level of college to play basketball. All it takes is a little effort on your part. This "tip" walks you through a process to make promoting players extremely efficient.

As a coach, it's your responsibility to create opportunities for any player who has a dream to play college basketball, that is, if they truly have the potential. You need to be that change agent in their lives. Make it happen and do whatever you can to promote your players and help create a great college situation for him that could have life-long, positive impact.