**Coaching Philosophy**

My philosophy on coaching is mainly based on the fact that coaching is much more than just following a set of principles or having a well-established program. Coaching is the interaction and impact you have on young lives. Every athlete that I coach will be a student, relative, or friend to someone. And no vague list of rules and treatments can be applied to each athlete, because every athlete is and will be different. It is my responsibility as a coach to help my players make healthy and mature decisions in all areas of life, on and off the field. As a coach I willingly and knowingly take on the responsibility of helping develop my athletes’ character, discipline, self-motivation, confidence, and excitement for the game. A good coach will make their players see what they can be, rather than what they are.

First off, academics must be the most important thing. You may love the sport you are playing and dream of becoming professional and become something great; however you must prepare yourself for all aspects of life before you’re able to succeed on the sports field. Academics teach you a lot of the lessons and ideas that I expect to be displayed on and off the field; such as, time-management, studying, problem solving, social behaviors and prioritizing. I believe that a strong student can be a strong athlete; if they take school seriously they will take the team seriously. Therefore, I stride for my athletes to have a 3.0 or above GPA. I am aware that this is a high expectation but I believe that if I keep my athletes focused on priorities, they will succeed academically and become better people in the long run.

Secondly, I expect passion out of my players. I strongly believe that if you are passionate about something you will have the self-motivation and drive to succeed in any way possible. You cannot force passion; it is built within one’s self. Therefore I believe you get the best effort from others not by lighting the fire beneath them, but by building the fire within. This means that my athletes can never be bored. If they wake up and are bored with life, if they don't get up every morning with a burning desire to do things, you don't have enough goals; and my athletes will have the passion to want to make themselves better and set the goals to get there. You can motivate by fear, and you can motivate by reward. But both those methods are only temporary. The only lasting thing is self motivation and the passion within. My athletes need to look at this as not just a sport, but as something more. The “more” is a vague term; however each player must be able to define what that term means to them. If there’s passion and fire in the eyes of the individual the outcome is only positive for the team as a whole.

Which leads to my next expectation, the team. An individual commitment to a group effort is what makes a team work. It is easy to find great players, it is not so easy to find great players who can play as a team. I expect leaders, but leaders are not born, they are made. And when those leaders are recognized and brought forward they need to understand that title does not allow them to stray away from the team, but to LEAD the team to success and not TAKE them there.

Then it comes to the aspect of winning. Everyone likes to win, there is no sugar coating or lying about that fact. And I expect my team to not only want to win but have the need to win. However, I don’t expect a win to simply come from a higher number on the score board, but how my team handles those numbers. And the answer to that is class. Win or lose, my athletes WILL do it with class. This means that we will do the right thing regardless of a win or loss; we will see other teams doing the wrong thing but that will not detract us from continuing our class. A true winner is not one that leaves with higher stats at the end of the season, but who worked their ass off all season for those stats and has their dignity and class to go along with them. We will not look at losing as a failure, because we don’t fail; we succeed at finding what doesn’t work. And that view of failure will make our team not only the best, but the best with class and willingness to become better.

What leads to a win? Number one is practice. In my eyes practice does not make perfect, but perfect practice makes perfect. When my players come to practice it is their duty to play like it is a game, because how you practice is how you play. My players will work for their spots, you must earn your playing time, like in life, nothing is just handed to you. And the way I look at every game is we didn’t lose, we just ran out of time; and we will finish it at our next practice. My players will work, and hey, no one’s ever drowned in sweat.

Finally, you must deserve to win. When the final moments of the game are at hand, and you are being tested against someone who is either equal or superior, you must honestly know that you deserve to win. You need to know you trained harder, longer, risked more, and sweated more. I believe that this approach will prepare you for the worst results. Because even if the score at the end of the game is not what you hoped for, you know that you gave every ounce of what you had, and there was nothing more you could have done.

This approach will take time and effort. It will take a group of unique individuals who know they can accomplish this approach and are willing to learn it. It will take teamwork. It will take hard work. It will take dedication. And most importantly it will take the ability to keep the fire burning within, even when the rains of self-doubt, defeat, and quitting come rolling in.