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Basketball and Jesus

By Johnny Kicklighter

Our church has an organized basketball program managed and coached by Doug White (not to be confused by our pastor who also has the same name). Recently, I asked Doug why he was so passionate about the sport of basketball, and what does basketball have to do with Christianity. I thought his philosophy may be helpful to others who desire to build a church sports program. He expounded that organized basketball can be a great Christian training ground. Doug believed it starts with the right goal in mind: building up believers for their Christian walk. Coach White adheres to the following eight principles:

1. The program leader and coaches must remember the program goal in every activity they undertake. The core to a successful basketball program is conditioning and fundamentals. Those are two things most kids will like the least because they're infected by television sports; where the focus is on the individual player to look as good as possible. By focusing on conditioning and fundamentals, coaches can begin to wean their kids off of the glory-seeking mentality inherent in today's professional sports and develop a TEAM.
2. Every practice must begin and end with a prayer and those prayers should be led by players as soon as possible. The last 15 minutes of every practice should be a Bible study lesson where the players MUST bring a lesson or verse and be prepared to give its meaning and an application to basketball or their daily lives. Every player is required to have their Bible in hand and a lesson written down inside.
3. The Bible study lesson will be one of the most emotionally challenging tasks the players will face. Not only do they have to read and understand, but they also have to speak in front of their peers. To demonstrate how simple the task really is, Coach White will lead the first 2 or 3 by turning to a chapter in Proverbs. Proverbs is an easy book to use because it's built around life lessons. The challenges faced on the court boil down to challenges in life: anger management, cooperation, physical effort, pain, disappointment, and joy. The requirement to have a lesson on a piece of paper can be answered simply by writing a Proverb on a piece of paper with the point the player is trying to make. Those without a Bible or lesson earn a martyr (what the secular world calls a suicide) for each infraction. The penalized player will run while we prepare the lesson.

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4. Coaches need to remind their players that all the heavy conditioning will be lifelong examples the players can use when basketball becomes just a fond memory. Working hard and hammering their bodies into fit vessels will make their brains more alert and able to accomplish seemingly impossible physical tasks for years into the future. And if some of the players actually choose to become missionaries, their physical training will form a great basis to endure the hardships in third world countries.

5. To successfully reach the primary goal of improving our Christian walk, basketball games become framed in the context of physical contests and opportunities to demonstrate a Christ-like attitude. Christian players do NOT challenge or complain about a referee's call. The Christian player appreciates the referee's difficult position of managing chaos and understands the thankless job they've undertaken. Complaining about a call, rolling their eyes, or hot-dogging earns them an immediate spot on the bench where they can see the cost to their teammates of their absence.

6. The other team is not the enemy but are brothers that challenge us. If the other team is secular, then we become a team of witnesses of how Jesus would behave and how He makes us different. The goal as a Christian team is put out an effort level Jesus would be pleased with, and an attitude that makes fans and players both wonder how it can be in today's world. As Christians playing basketball, we should be victorious whether we're winning or losing the game.

7. When the game is over, win or lose, the players must understand that God is in control. God is a details kind of guy who has numbered the cattle on a thousand hills, so he knows exactly what went on during the game. And He watches what happens AFTER the game. Win or lose, the Christian team is the envy of every fan and every coach because of how they behave AND how they play. As the coach for a Christian team, you model that same attitude. No team is ever blown out by your team, no matter how poor their skills. Every team gets the same level of respect you want for your team — even if that means you put a lid on your best players, denying them the opportunity to score at will. We still play hard and give our best effort, but we can always stop short of running up the score.

8. The real measure of success for the coach isn't the won-loss record, but the activities his players become involved in once basketball is over. A successful coach will have successful PEOPLE graduating from his program, and they, in turn, can positively affect the people they come in contact with as they go through life.

Coach White's basketball link can be found at

www.ebiblechurch.net

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3 Little Known Tips Of Basketball Hoop Shopping

By Richard Menzel

I've got a confession to make. I play basketball. I play it very poorly and can't make very many of the shots that I shoot at the basketball hoop. I have a feeling that I am not alone in the world at being a rather poor basketball player. However, one thing that I'm not bad at is comparison shopping. I've mastered the ancient art of comparing prices between merchants and can usually ferret out a fairly good deal with a little bit of leg work. Basketball hoops are no different than other items when it comes to shopping for them. There are some tips you should know before embarking on your journey to shop for a basketball hoop.

1)New or Used. You really might consider buying a used basketball hoop if you are interested in value. However, make sure you are buying one that hasn't been banged up too bad. Years of basketball practice can only make your rim bent and dirty. Ebay can be a great place to buy used equipment and basketball hoops are regularly for sale on Ebay.

2)Do your homework by comparing different merchant offers on different search engines and different websites. Just because something is advertised for sale on Google doesn't mean its also advertised for sale on Yahoo. Some merchants advertise their good strictly through the Amazon partners program and don't do any other advertising anywhere else. Price vary drastically and the only way you will know that you are getting a good deal is to examine what the different people are selling the same goods for on different websites. Basketball hoops are no exception.

3)Learn about the different types and styles of basketball hoops. Without the knowledge of what you are buying, points #1 and #2 are nearly worthless. Buy your hoop the right way and get a great deal on one by being an informed consumer. Learn how to buy a basketball hoop and you can guarantee that you got a better deal than everyone else.

Tim Jeffries is author of "The Basketball Hoop Guide." Get your copy at

<http://www.basketballhoopers.com>

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