



BASKETBALL THOUGHTS - LARRY BROWN

Three things are non-negotiable as a team: 1) defend, 2) give up no second shots, 3) take good shots.

Statistics that are important to me are FG% defense, rebound differential, and our turnovers versus opponent turnovers. I love team steals. In an NBA game the 93-92 score bothers me. I want the game played with more points.

During the lockout year, I went to watch Princeton practice. They didn't do one defensive drill. That year they led college basketball in field goal percentage defense. There are a lot of different philosophies that are effective.

Today's players lack a middle game.

I liked the old system in college when Freshmen played on the JV team. This helped players learn the game the right way.

A problem for good young players in the NBA is they get drafted high by a bad team. They play a lot and produce, but they get accustomed to losing and the habits of a losing environment. Then, these young players are rewarded, but not for winning.

Keys to winning include: taking good shots, don't foul, defend with intensity and togetherness, rebound at both ends, don't turn the ball over.

Europeans do a great job of utilizing the 3 pt. line on offense and defense. They make the game look like its 3 on 3. In the United States, our game looks like it's 8 on 8 at times.

Do shell every day as a coach. It makes your team better on offense and defense.

As coaches, help each other and the game of basketball.

When it comes to scouting, I focus on what we do. A lot of times I learn from my players. There is a reason why they are in the NBA. I want to "empower my players".

The best college teams have great senior leadership.

One "@\$\$hole" can ruin a team.

When you play for Bob Knight you become "tougher" as a person.

I don't like offense, I like defense. I believe great defensive teams won't take as many bad shots on offense.

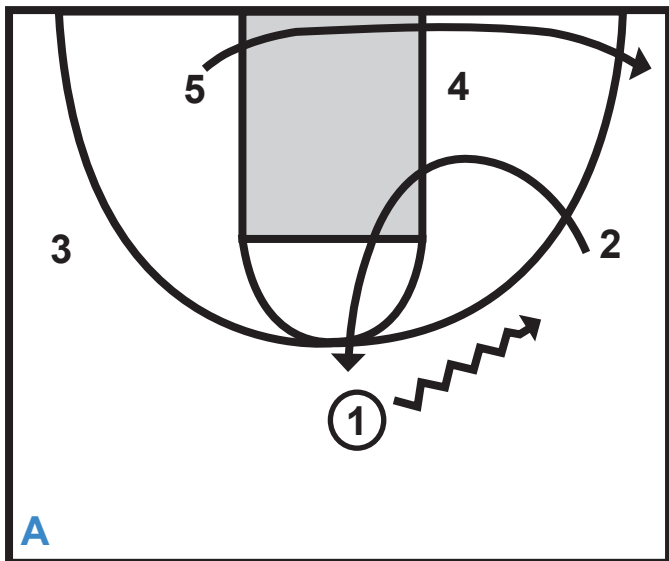
Run your program from day one like you envision it being in the future, as you see it down the road. Coach for now with vision. As a coach, be comfortable with what you do. Why change?

I like to workout together as a staff. It promotes an exchange of ideas in a natural setting.

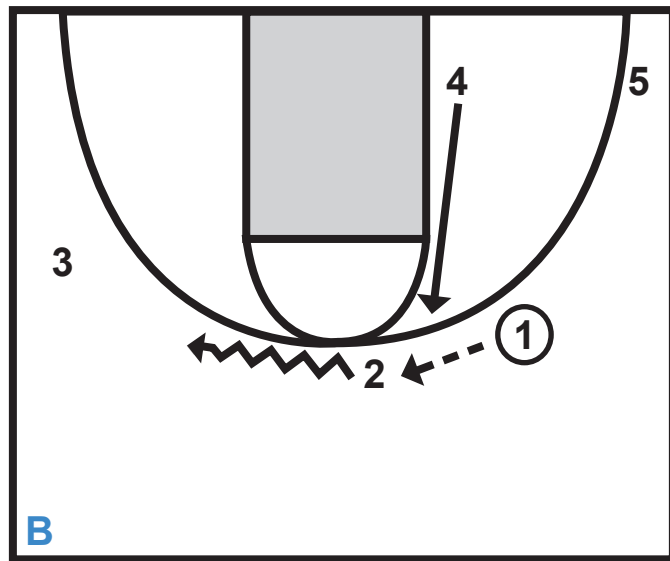


PLAY OF THE WEEK - ZONE OFFENSE

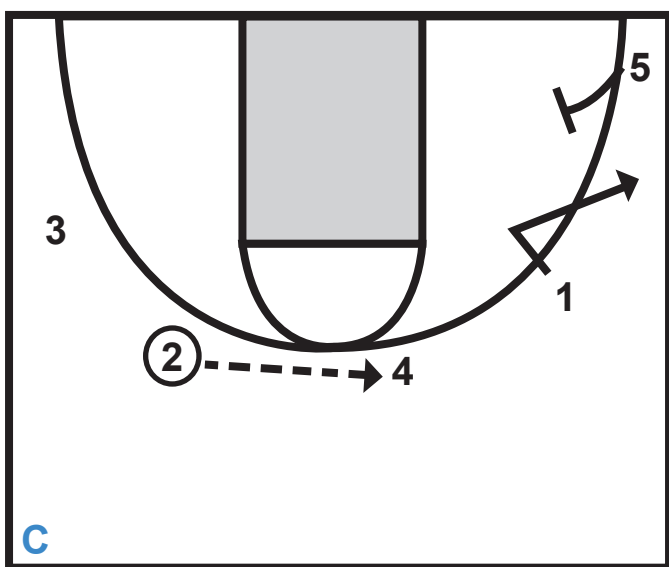
3-2 SET - FLARE



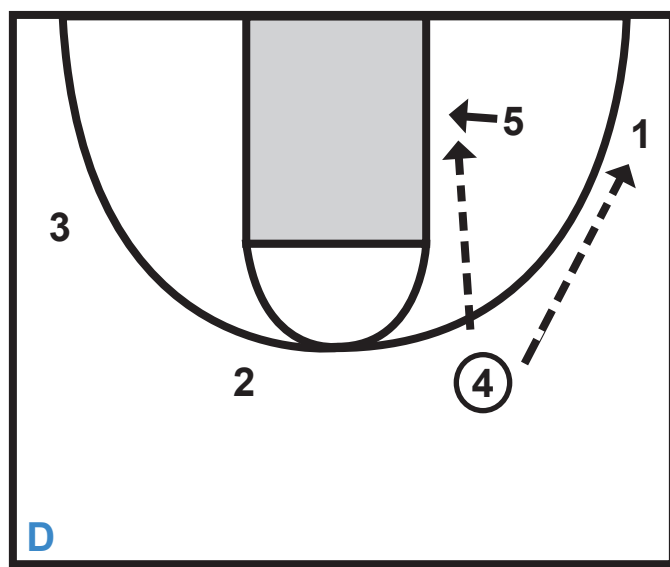
3-2 Alignment. 1 dribble loops 2. 5 sprints to the ballside corner.



1 passes to 2. 2 dribbles toward 3. 4 replaces 2.



2 passes back to 4. On the catch by 4, 5 screens in for 1.

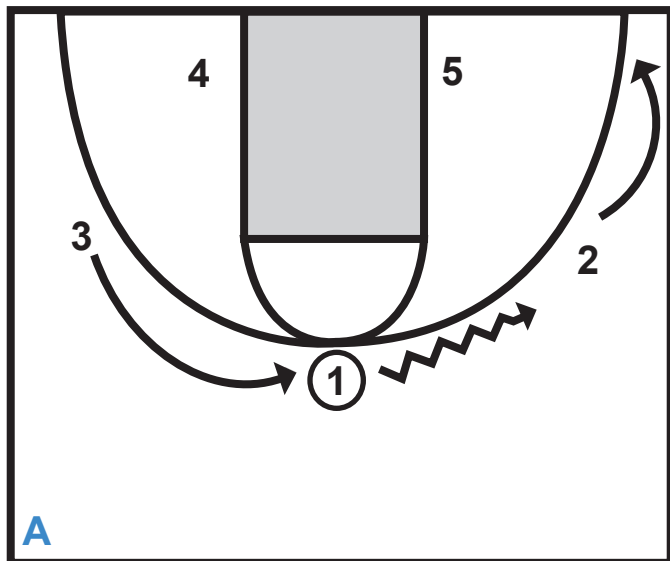


4 sees 1 and 5 "slipping".

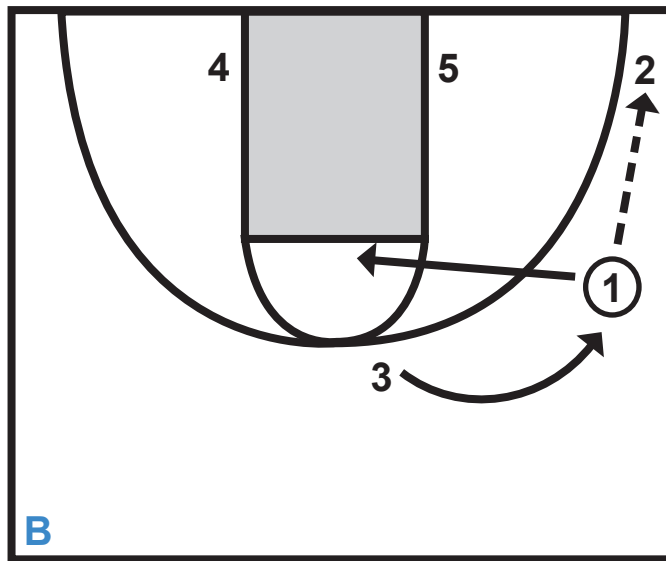


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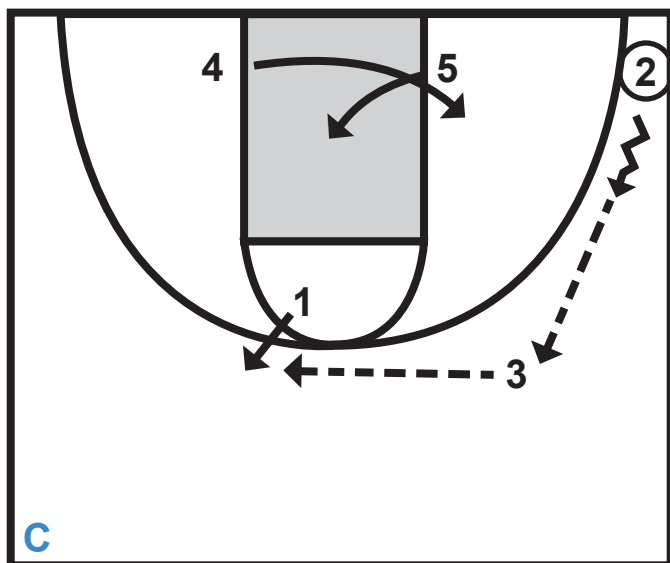
3-2 SET - PUSH



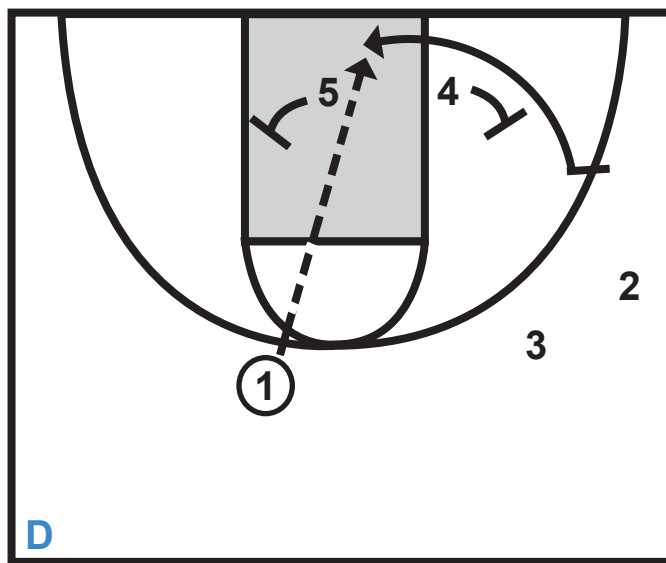
A
3-2 Alignment. 1 dribbles at 2 and pushes 2 to the corner. 3 replaces 1.



B
1 passes to 2. 3 and 1 interchange positions.



C
2 dribbles up and passes to 3. 5 and 4 "x". 3 quickly passes to 1.

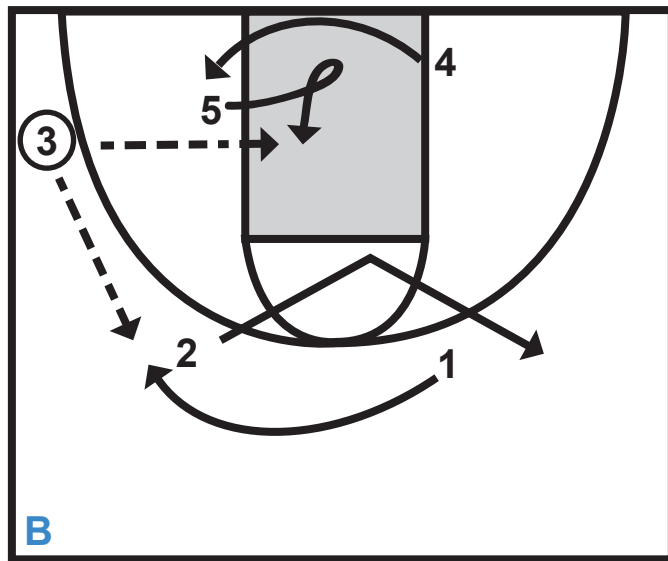
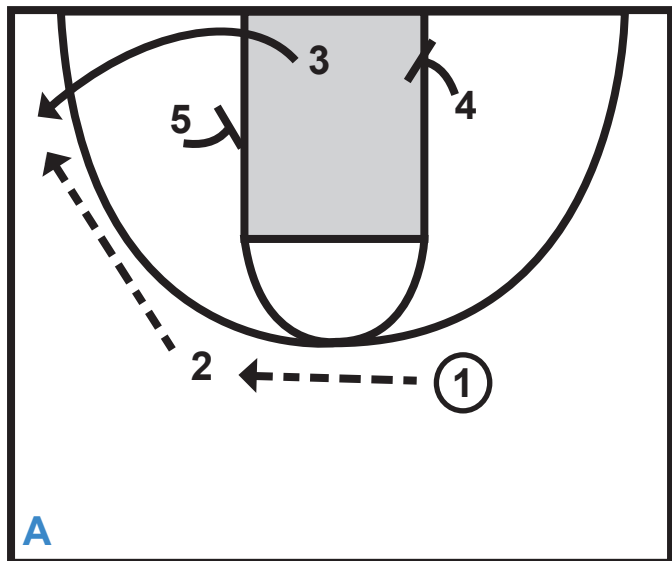


D
4 screens the backside forward. 5 screens the back of the zone center. 2 cuts for a lob. 1 lob passes to 2.



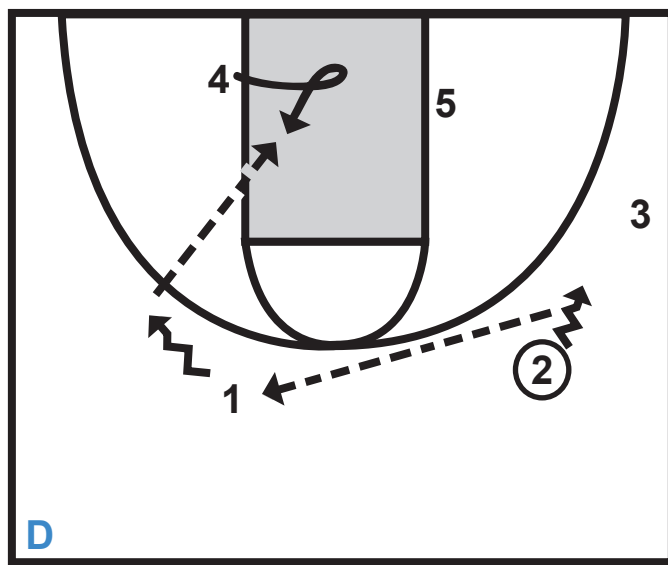
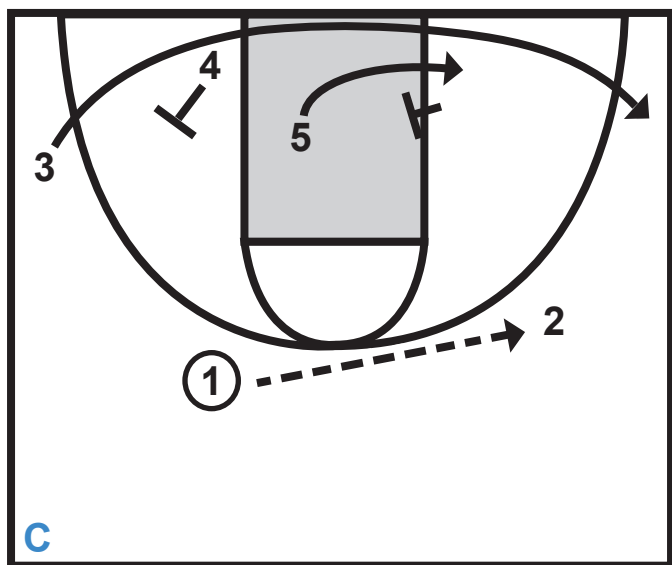
PLAY OF THE WEEK - ZONE OFFENSE

BASELINE RUNNER - THROWBACK



Two guard front is formed. 5 and 4 assume roles as screeners. 3 is to be screened for. 3 runs off of a 5 screen.

As 3 catches the pass, 1 and 2 interchange. 5 seeks the next zone defender and seals him as 4 cuts under the goal to the ball side post or short corner area. 3 sees 5 and 4 first, then passes to 1.



1 quickly reverses the ball to 2. 3 sprints off of baseline screens from 4 and 5.

2 sees 3 first, then quickly passes back to 1. 4 "button hooks" the weakside zone defender. 1 passes to 4.

Lessons from Losing

When losses start piling up, self-doubt is sure to follow. Should you change your approach? How can you keep student-athletes from growing frustrated? Here, a Hall of Fame high school coach offers advice for getting the most out of a losing season.

By Lem Elway

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Coaching Management, 14.6, August 2006,
<http://www.momentummedia.com/articles/cm/cm1406/lessonsfromlosing.htm>

I don't like to lose. I don't even like to write about losing. But we've all been through it—having a losing season that doesn't turn around no matter what you do.

In today's world, with parents scrutinizing your every move, you can't just grit your teeth through a bad year. In fact, a sub-par season needs to be handled with as much care—if not more—than a winning season.

Losses usually lead to questions and doubts: Should I alter my approach? Set new rules? Change my expectations? How do I keep athletes from getting frustrated? How do I keep them from losing confidence in me? Should I start playing younger players and looking ahead to next year? How do I respond to the complaints of parents and fans? And how do I make sure I don't lose my job? Your answers and actions will make a huge difference in how things turn out.

CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF

It is important to realize that losing is not an indictment of your coaching ability. However, the way you respond to losing can be. When losses pile up, your values and leadership will be exposed in a new way. How you respond to adversity will show those around you what you're really about.

That's why the first step to take when you start losing is to review your coaching philosophy. If you have a written philosophy, re-read it. It will help remind you why you coach, and for most of us, it's not only about winning. Staying true to your coaching philosophy is paramount to keeping the situation positive.

Here are three critical areas that will define who you are during a losing season:

Consistent Expectations: During a losing season, it can be tempting to lower your standards for player behavior and work ethic. However, your players stand to gain

nothing from you lowering your expectations. If you expect them to get to practice 10 minutes early every day when the team is winning, they should continue to do so when they're losing. If you give out an award in practice every week to the player who works hardest, you should continue doing it, even if it feels like that hard work isn't paying off.

Emotional Control: For both players and coaches, keeping emotions in check becomes more difficult when the losses keep coming. But this is the time when your leadership and maturity are most needed to set an example for your athletes. Take the time to go over your rules on behavior more frequently than usual, and don't hesitate to quickly call players on any negative actions.

Staying Positive: It's extremely easy to feel negative about your players and yourself when the losses pile up, and you need to fight this every step of the way. Every word out of your mouth and all your body language needs to convey that you have not lost hope.

It's up to you to continue hustling, being enthusiastic, and bringing energy to practices and contests. You must be as excited as ever when something good happens and present nothing but positive encouragement when things are not going right.

Examine your words and your tone of voice. Yelling is not an acceptable way to correct players, nor is foul language. Be a teacher and explain in a confident voice the mistake that was made. Every time you open your mouth, something constructive should come out.

EVALUATE WHY YOU'RE LOSING

A key part of getting through a losing season is making sure athletes and parents do not lose confidence in you. The best way to ensure this is to continually evaluate why the team is losing and try to turn things around.

Let your athletes and their parents know that you are constantly analyzing everything the team does to make whatever changes are needed. Break down every game and figure out what went wrong and what went right. Know what your athletes are doing well and where they need to improve. Are there problems with concentration, technical skills, or communication? Have you neglected to teach them something? What will you do in practice to work on those problems?

I am a firm believer in the motto, "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link," and when we're losing, I ask myself if there is a weak link on defense or offense. I use statistics and performance analysis to find areas that need improvement. Then, I work with those athletes to improve their skills, or I increase the number of athletes working at the position so I can make a change if necessary. Either the athlete gets better or I alter the lineup.

Throughout all these evaluations, I make sure I am communicating well. After games, I talk to players about what caused the team to lose and what we need to do to improve. I

post production sheets on the locker room bulletin board so my athletes can see the facts of their performance, and I let them know that I am evaluating them on their hustle, teamwork, and attitude.

I also ask them to evaluate themselves using one question: Did you give 100-percent effort today? If they can answer yes, then I feel we are achieving our goals. Each athlete needs to answer this question for himself, not for me or anyone else.

At the same time, I emphasize that we're all in this together. I try to create the feeling that everyone must learn from others' mistakes in a constructive, not destructive, manner. I also emphasize that comments on individual mistakes are not to be taken personally. I try to convey the idea that figuring out what's going wrong and how to change it is a fun, dynamic process.

TOUGH DECISIONS

Once you've determined why your team is losing, you may be faced with some difficult decisions. The most important thing is for you to be able to justify your actions in whatever you do, because sometimes, you'll need to make tough decisions. Here are some big questions that can arise:

Individual vs. Team: What if there's one athlete who is trying to play at the next level but the team is hindering him? I still base everything we do on team goals—not on the individual. I let my best players know that for them to get the recognition they've worked for, the team must be successful. If they continue to work hard on an individual basis, the team will succeed. The message from the coach must be that both goals are intertwined.

I also remind athletes that if they want to play at the next level, the college recruiters who come to watch them are watching everything they do. If they see an athlete only trying to impress the recruiter and not being a team player, that will not make a good impression.

Sitting Seniors: What if you decide that a senior on the team is a weak link? I always convey to seniors that they should be the strongest members of the team, and if they aren't the best at their position, they should expect no favors. If an underclassman begins to play better than a senior, I will not hesitate to start the younger athlete. However, I always have factual information to support my decision and I often make it a gradual transition.

I've also learned that, during these changes, it is critical for a coach to protect the younger player from abuse from the older player. This can be an emotional time for a senior and his or her parents, who are faced with losing their role and stature on the team. This should never be underestimated, and the coach must communicate well and offer compassion and understanding.

When Players Quit: Some players are not able to deal with losing and may decide to

quit the team during the season. As a coach, be ready to deal with that possibility. Be aware some will go quietly, while others will make a scene. Some might also direct their animosity toward you. In this situation, always take the high road in your reaction. It is imperative that your team is ready to regroup quickly and move on with the players who have decided to remain.

If possible, I try to talk to every kid who quits to find out why. I think about their reason and if I, as a coach, feel I did something to make them quit, I try to change that part of my coaching. If the reasons for quitting come down to simply not having the right attitude, I wish them the best and tell them I'm glad they were part of the program.

MAKE IT A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

We've all heard the saying, "You can learn more from losing than winning," but the operative word there is *can*—this learning doesn't happen automatically. You need to seize the teachable moments of losing.

To start, I always ask my players how they want to be remembered when they leave high school. Do they want to be the athlete who fought through adversity, or the athlete who helped bring the team down? I explain that one's true character comes out during tough times, and if they can hold their heads high while losing, they'll know how to hold their heads high when they experience adversity in their adult lives. If they can hold onto a "never give up" attitude in sports, they will go far in anything else they choose to do.

We also talk about how losing can bring us together or tear us apart. One baseball season I started with seven seniors who had minimal varsity experience from the previous year. Over the season the players developed togetherness and support for each other, and the team won the league championship. The energy created by hard work fueled everything.

Communication is key to the learning process. I make sure there are times when athletes can voice their frustrations, either one-on-one with me or in a group. They need to be able to express themselves, and I let them know they can talk to me to let off steam. At the same time, they know that they will be held accountable for what they say to the whole team.

What do I do when an individual athlete or an entire team has endured a particularly dismal outing? I believe it is good for athletes to face the reality of "being down," especially when their performance has created the situation. If young people can be held accountable and accept responsibility for their part in a loss, they are learning a wonderful life lesson. If they can say, "I wasn't giving 100-percent effort today" or "I botched the play," they can figure out how to change their attitude or skills to help make sure it doesn't happen again.

Through it all, I always try to teach the ultimate lesson—that sports are fun, no matter what the score is. I always want to accentuate the positive and show interest in the present. We laugh and joke every day. Win or lose, you need to keep true to your

philosophy and your role as a mentor of young people.

Sidebar: **JOB SECURITY**

The worst part about a losing season is that it gives people license to question your decisions and objectives. I can think of several coaches who posted continuous winning seasons, had one losing season, and were suddenly faced with all sorts of questions that led to their firing.

The key to avoiding the one-bad-season axe is to communicate with parents and administrators and educate them about what you're trying to do. Over the years, I've come to realize that it is not only important to mold players, but also their parents, who will be very vocal if the team begins to lose.

For example, I hold a clinic just for parents, where our coaching staff presents the fundamentals we are trying to teach in our program and explains why we teach techniques the way we do. We periodically have pre- and post-event get-togethers and dinners for team members and families, and I regularly send group e-mails to update parents on schedule changes and team notes. When the team is losing, I intensify this communication, spending even more time talking to parents about what we are trying to do.

During a losing season, it can be tempting to hunker down, avoid contact, and communicate less than usual. Fighting this urge can earn you a new level of respect from parents and administrators. It can also help you keep your job.