Matthew Lauritsen

3 Dimensional Coaching

Final Interview Summary

The Papillion South Titans basketball program is being led by a coach who is intentionally leading in all three dimensions. Joel Heuser is thoughtful, reflective, and addicted to being great at what he does. This made for a great interview. It was profitable for me to hear him articulate his “why” and paint a picture of what that looked like on the practice floor, coach’s office, and locker room. We both benefitted from the exchange because we have come to know that if a coach is in the same program for an extended period of time, he or she tends to have tunnel vision of how things are done. After hearing Coach Heuser over breakfast talk through the ins and outs of the program, I can see strong 3Dimensional practices that consistently bear fruit. I’m thankful that he shared some of negative things that happen within the Papillion South basketball program too. The interview and reflection has served as an encouragement to me to implement new strategies in all dimensions.

The strongest element that I perceived from Coach Heuser’s program is the intentionality. Everyday during practice Coach Heuser has a “coach’s corner” where he’s able to share and facilitate conversation about whatever 2nd or 3rd dimension topic is pertinent for the team. The Leadership Academy is another structure in place that I was intrigued by. I think peer modeling, as was introduced in the course, would be a cool byproduct of this process. Although structures and strategies are important, the heart is most important, and Coach Heuser alluded to this time and time again. The heart of the leader is so critical. If the heart is there, the people will buy in. If the heart isn’t there, and things seem phony, a coach is climbing a steep bank. Because Heuser has been at his current post for 16 years, he has been able to see the culture of the program take shape. Clarity is strength of the program - It is clear that the coaches under him understand his “why” and thus the program’s “why.” The staff has been intact for the most part for the majority of the 16 years and obviously have bought into this vision.

Coach Heuser was the first to admit shortcomings, fumbled situations, and challenges. We talked at length about culture shifts, the entitlement generation, and the effects of youth sports on the high school and college game. If I were going to provide suggestions from information I’ve recently learned, I would try to sell Coach Heuser on the idea of including parents more in the process. As the head of a program, it is a critical and daunting task to win over parents in the concepts of 3Dimensional coaching. He is a great teacher, and sitting with him over breakfast felt like I was being mentored in a way. I think this mentoring element could be one that is grown to include his assistant coaches. The hardest part of our conversation was sharing stories about trying to capture the heart of an athlete, but the athlete not being receptive. Even after this course, I don’t feel like I have good suggestions for Coach Heuser if encouragement, love, and accountability aren’t working for a certain player.

Processing the ideas of 3D coaching and evaluating my own teams on the micro level as well as Coach Heuser’s program on the macro level was extremely beneficial. I knew I was in a good place when I had sat and talked with a coach for over an hour and a half and we hadn’t talked x’s and o’s once. We were talking about heart – our own hearts as well as our athletes’. The interaction encouraged me to keep growing and emboldened me to take risks towards becoming a more effective coach in all 3 dimensions.