

COACHING ETHICS

(Presented at the National Basketball Coaches Meeting 1936).

May I quote from an outstanding superintendent of schools in Pennsylvania on the requirement of an athletic coach? "The coach of a competitive team has a most important task - he means so much to the school, the boys, the public. There are several fundamental questions that should be asked about a man before he is entrusted with the responsibility of coaching boys. What manner of man is this? How does he speak and act? Is he sound and clean in mind so that his influence is inspiring and uplifting? Would he set a fine example - not by posing, but by being-- the type of man we want each of the boys to be? If these questions cannot be answered favorably, stop then and there. No other qualities can supplant the fundamental qualities of character."

Surely the athletic coach of today must measure up to rigid high standards of both education and essential manhood. Any profession so exacting and so demanding is being built upon the bed of rock of education and must continue to grow and elevate itself to constantly higher planes.

Ethics--that means the code, the rules and the orders of our profession with something else added, our attitude. These ethics or practices can be no higher than the men that make up the basketball coaching profession.

We are not going into great detail in the discussion of what constitutes ethics, and the part that you gentlemen play in them. Simply suffice it to say that we want to discuss some of the things that are coming up in our profession that might not be in line with educational principles.

1. Coaching from the sidelines. What is coaching from the sidelines? Can you answer that question? Do you coach from the sidelines? Is conveying to your players the length of time remaining in a ball game coaching? If you yell at one of your players as he goes by is that coaching? These are all questions that men must answer. Do you give a signal from the bench for a certain play, or to change from a fast breaking attack to a slow attack? We do not believe that we should try to move the boys about on a court as though they were pawns in our hands, do you? Now there is a difference in coaches. We have had an opportunity in the past two years to check the coaches in the Big Ten. There are one or two who sit quietly unperturbed on the bench. Most of them move about, yell, stand up, and react to the way the play is going on the court. We think some of our outstanding coaches in basketball have a reputation for going through various antics during the procedure of a game. Is this just a matter of temperament and should we condone this type of practice? (I do not believe that we can reprimand these coaches for that type of action, because they are not trying to coach from the bench, but their temperament will not allow them to sit still. We class three or four of the outstanding coaches of this country in that particular group).