

Lawson: Well, Dr. Allen, of course you are teaching a competitive sport, and you naturally want to win - and you have won far more than your share. But in doing so I want to know if your boys have enjoyed playing, or if they have had to sacrifice this to the necessity of winning. I have wondered sometimes, too, if you have not had to demand too much of your boys in excessive physical strains and in excessive time for practice at the expense of other school work and social obligations. And there are some people who question whether competitive sports build character as much as you feel they do.

Allen: Dean Lawson, in all of my teaching of basketball, my paramount interest has been the building of morale, and you cannot build morale unless you teach education fundamentally. Those fundamentals are loyalty to the institution, loyalty to the group, self-abstinence from the things that injure the body machine. I often tell my players what Maude Royden, the great English sociologist, once said: "You cannot break Nature's laws, but you can break yourself against Nature's laws." Of course, we first learn fundamentals, and the fundamentals of basketball are comparable to the fundamentals of living. One must have a buoyant, adventurous spirit to attack any problem. Such spirit gives poise for doing a thing superbly. This ability, our modern culture prizes. These modern skills executed in an exceptional way will give the individual an opportunity under trained leadership to see and to appreciate both his own unique physical strength and weaknesses, and gives him a method whereby he can plan to use this knowledge throughout life.

Lawson: Well, Dr. Allen, in reply to that I want to say something you don't know I'm going to say. I am glad to state that in my judgment you have been tremendously successful in doing what you say is your chief aim in teaching basketball - namely, to build character. In spite of the time your boys must put on basketball to win the continuous championships they do, I am proud to note that by and large they are good students, and the grades of your squads are something you may take pride in, in addition to their championships. Besides, I am proud of the standards of personal behavior and social responsibility which your teams down through the years have possessed. I have learned by personal contact, in a number of individual cases, that you have taught your boys that the way to solve life's difficulties is not to run away from them but to look them in the eye and face them. Consequently, you have been able to help boys not only to win an uphill fight in a championship race, but also have made some of these same boys determined to win an uphill fight when scholastic and financial and personal problems have seemed too great.

Allen: Thank you very much, Dean Lawson. This last statement of yours was wholly a surprise to me. However, I do want you to know that I genuinely appreciate your remarks. I want you to know that I learn as much from my boys, perhaps, as I endeavor to teach them. An incident came up in our championship game with Oklahoma at Norman this past season that I shall never forget. Sylvester Schmidt, honor student and our co-captain, was assigned the job of beating