CHALLENGE IN COACHING WOMEN BASKETBALL TEAM IN ROMANIA AT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract
Recruiting women athletes in Romania to form a basketball representative team of a University is a challenge. All over the world strategies have been developed and implemented at national levels and the success in International competition showed up. This study is related to discovered challenges and some ways to overcome them in the process of recruiting, practice and game coaching of a Romanian basketball team at University level.

Keywords: basketball team, recruiting, challenges, women coach, practice

JEL classification: I00, I31

1. Introduction
The Romanian basketball system is challenged by the lack of representation of female leading coaches. Even though women have acquired leadership roles in a lot of areas however in the area of basketball, women have yet to gain the full credibility and professional respect equal to their male counterparts. International research indicates that women who pursue a career in basketball coaching face many adversities and struggle to attain a level of leadership at their highest potential. As a female coach for basketball you will be seen by the female athletes as a role model and therefore is very important to be at the highest level.

At international level there are a lot of programs with special designed for coaches of women’s sports. Unfortunately in Romania there is a lack in this area. Recently a lot of new approaches for success in careers have been dedicated to women, but none is specifically designed for women coaches of women’s sports.

Apart from the fact that “The physical activity done regularly and according to certain rules allows the individual to have access to an optimal quality of life” (Ciomag and Dinciu, 2014) to be part of a successful team in basketball is a step further. Besides the expertise gained during your career as a basketball coach the ride to gain success is a roller-coaster.

The purpose of this article is to highlight some challenges that women coaches

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must overcome and to discuss some strategies for facilitating the success in basketball of a women representative team at University level.

2. Discussion
Most of the time it is very difficult to understand the athletic department program model and the philosophy of the management. You have to struggle to figure out if all teams are viewed and treated equally or if there is a hierarchy of financial support. Once you pass this first step you can focus on the recruiting. If you are lucky a lot of female students will show up for announced recruiting events. If not, you need to go “hunting” at every sport event organized by your University.

First points in recruiting you get if you find the students that enjoys competing in sport. Initially, even if you do not find strong basketball players, however it is a good start point if you have a team enjoying the fact that they have to work hard to become good. You have to convince then to embrace the challenge of not being the best basketball player right away and to treat each other as partners on the field. We have to make sure from the beginning that the winning attitude is already on board. If you get professional players (active or not at the time of recruiting) they will know what it's like to work hard, and will work. Most of the time once the urge is there, you just need some enthusiasm to get it flowing again.

3. Practice and coaching
One important issue related to the student athletes is to tell them about the right nutrition and physical exercise for a healthy life (Ciomag and Ilie, 2013, Ciomag and Dinciu, 2014). Have regular talks with them about their habits and how to improve their strengths (Ciomag 2008, Ciomag and Ilie, 2008, Netolinzchi et al. 2013).

If you start the season with the definitive goal that you want to be successful, you will definitely become overwhelmed as a coach. Considering the little time you spent with the athletes (once a week) in order to achieve a real team you have to be expert in a lot of areas: basketball expert, teacher expert, organizer, floor general, psychologist, and more. This is why this article is trying to pinpoints some challenges women coaches might face and to give some useful hints:

- Start with the basics! Always consider doing basic training with your team. Even if the players know how to shoot, pass, dribble, it will be extremely useful to remind them the techniques before they start practicing plays, moves, zones, and presses. Make a plan for each skill. Explain them piece by piece. Any player could learn more involved skills in only minutes if first they will properly execute individual ones.
• Individual instruction counts. Consider each athlete in your instruction in such a way that they will feel that the game depends on them. Each will start understanding their importance, appreciate their skills and will further improve. This way everyone will enjoy a great season of playing.

• Supervise everything! During the practice make sure your players do things right. Just practicing improperly will help them become experts in bad habits: shooting with faulty technique, dribbling with their heads down. If they can't do things correctly, don't let them do it.

• Make sure you look carefully each player in practice. Every session of training consider shooting practice. In proper shooting practice each player can shoot about 20 shots per minute. Watch and correct. Detect the mistakes of each player.

• Do not forget to teach and practice defense. Sometimes you win by just doing defense. But always spent a fair-share amount of time to play and teach person-to-person defense. Both defensive position and movement is easy to teach and learn for any athlete compared to offense.

• You can make a difference by just using conditioning of your players. Make the players understand the powerful resource of playing greater in the last few minutes of a game. It is proven that conditioned teams move faster at the ending minutes of a game and make fewer mistakes than poorly conditioned teams.

• Always make a plan

• Probably you feel you are going to spent and lose a lot of time but in fact good planning for the day, week, month, and season will help you be 10 times faster in everything. You can get 5-10 times more from your players if you plan. You don't have to follow exactly the daily schedule. You don't have to have the written scheme with you all the time. But you will find most of the times that having them handy will help a lot.

• Even though students hate homework, assign it! A lot of practice skills can be performed at home (even if a ball or/and a court are not handy!). Assigning homework yields amazing results. Real players can and will do it. The others will follow them. But make sure the homework involves only things you showed them how to do.

• And this is just the start. If you look at the American success in basketball at University level you will see that you are far away from their resources. They have assistants, managers, and statisticians. The staff also includes a person who films games and edit them for further discussion with the players. Every game someone run the clock and the scoreboard, and someone to do the
scorebook. There is always an announcer, and someone to organize the music at games. Even the popcorn and pizza selling during the games makes a difference: attract a lot of audience and makes everything a fun event not only a game. But why don't trying to do it in Romania? You would be surprised how many people are willing to help you as volunteers.

4. Conclusion

The success of a basketball women team representative of a University have to be based on a detailed management plan, a lot of adjusting, hard work and understanding. As a coach you have to surround yourself with people sharing the same coaching philosophy, the same passion for the game. Above of all, you need that everybody that is onboard to help you succeed as a team.

You have to demonstrate to each of your students that the spirit of teamwork and cooperation are the foundations of the game. Teach them to combine that with the will to compete like a champion and you have a team to start your way to get in the top. Your success is their trampoline toward a leadership role in the future.

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