"A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes." -- Hugh Downs

Employ your time in improving yourself by other men's writings so that you shall come easily by what others have labored hard for. -- Socrates

The art of choosing men is not nearly so difficult as the art of enabling those one has chosen to attain their full worth. -- Napoleon Bonaparte

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Plyometric Training For Sport Specific Power

Plyometric training has been shown to be one of the most effective methods for improving explosive power(1). A wide variety of athletes can benefit from power training, particularly if it follows or coincides with a strength training program.

This article outlines how to set up a plyometric program covering the parameters for sets, repetitions and exercise selection. The guidelines on this page can be used in conjunction with the various animated lower body plyometric exercises and upper body plyometric drills in this section of the website.

Plyometrics & The Strength Training Program

In order for plyometric training to be at its most effective it should follow a phase of maximal strength training (2,3). The purpose of plyometrics is to improve the athlete’s capacity to apply **more force more rapidly**. Logically then, the greater the athlete’s ability to generate maximal force or strength to begin with, the more of it can be converted into sport-specific power. See the sport specific approach to strength training programs for the ‘big picture’ and how plyometrics fits in to the overall strength program.

Plyometric Exercise Selection

There are many plyometric exercises for both the upper and lower body. As with other forms of sports training, exercise selection should mimic the movement patterns of the sport as closely as possible.

**Lower Body Plyometric Exercises**

lower body plyometric exercises are suitable for many sports such as basketball, track & field athletics, sprinting, soccer, hockey, rugby, football, baseball and so on. In fact, performance in any sport that involves jumping, sprinting or kicking can be improved with lower body plyometric exercises.

**Upper Body Plyometric Drills**

Performance in sports such as basketball, volleyball, softball, baseball, tennis, badminton, golf and the throwing events in athletics can benefit with upper body plyometric exercises. Also, certain position players such as goal keepers in soccer will find these drills useful. Most upper body plyometric drills requires the use of a medicine ball.
Exercise Intensity

The intensity of plyometric exercises varies greatly. Skipping exercises are classed as low intensity, while reactive drop jumps from 32in (80cm) and above are the highest intensity of the plyometric exercises. See the table below for further intensity classifications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise Type</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depth jumps 32-48in (80-120cm)</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bounding Exercises</td>
<td>Submaximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth jumps 8-20in (20-50cm)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low impact jumps/throws</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plyometric training should progress gradually from lower intensity to higher intensity drills, especially for individuals who lack a significant strength training background.

Increasing the load by adding additional weight thought weighted vests of ankle weights for example, is not recommended. Too great a load can reduce the speed and quality of movement negating the effects of plyometrics.

Volume

Plyometric volume relates to the number of repetitions per session. For lower body exercises a repetition is a ground contact. See the table below for the number of repetitions recommended for a plyometric training session:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Ground Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td>80 - 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>100 - 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>120 - 140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequency

Typically, 2-3 sessions of plyometrics can be completed in a week. Alternatively, recovery time between sessions can be used to prescribe frequency and is recommended at 48-72 hours.

It is not recommended that plyometric training be scheduled for the day after a heavy weight training session when muscles may still be sore. This poses a planning problem for athletes that may need to strength train 3-4 times per week. The table below offers a
solution to this problem by alternating upper and lower body strength training with upper and lower body plyometrics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Strength Session</th>
<th>Plyometric Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Upper body (high intensity)</td>
<td>Lower body (low intensity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>Lower body (low intensity)</td>
<td>Upper body (high intensity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>Rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>Upper body (low intensity)</td>
<td>Lower body (high intensity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Lower body (high intensity)</td>
<td>Upper body (low intensity)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sessions are suitable per week. For example, a track and field athlete may require 3-4 sessions during the preparation phase reducing to 2-3 session in-season. A football player on the other hand may require only 2-3 sessions pre-season reducing to 1-2 sessions during the competitive season. The phase of the training program will also determine how many plyometric training

Rest Intervals
The effectiveness of a plyometric training session depends on maximal effort and a high speed of movement for each repetition. Rest intervals between repetitions and sets should be long enough to allow almost complete recovery. As much as 5-10 seconds may be required between depth jumps and a work to rest ratio of 1:10 is recommended. For example, if a set of bounds takes 30 seconds to complete, the rest interval between sets would be 300 seconds or 5 minutes.

Warming Up
As with any training an adequate warm up is required before completing a plyometric training session. The Nation Strength & Conditioning Association (3) recommends that toe jogging and straight leg jogging be included as part of the warm up to prepare for the shock impact of plyometric drills. Plyometrics should be completed at the start of a combined session when the athlete is fresh.

Safety Considerations
Limited data exists as to whether there is any increased risk of injury through plyometric training. However, due to the stress that repeated shock-tension exercises can place on joints and connective tissue, several safety guidelines have been proposed.

It has been suggested that athletes should be able to complete a one repetition maximum squat a weight 1.5 times that of their bodyweight and bench press a weight 1-1.5 times bodyweight.

Balance is also an important factor in the safe performance of plyometric exercises. Again, it has been recommended that athletes can stand on one leg for 30 seconds in order to
complete less intense exercises. For more advanced exercises they should be able to stand on one leg for 30 seconds in a semi-squat position.

Plyometric training is contraindicated in prepubescent children as it may cause damage to the epiphyseal plates that have yet to close (7,9). Some strength and conditioning professionals have questioned this as children routinely perform jumping movements as part of unstructured play. However, to be effective, plyometric training requires numerous, repeated maximal efforts. It is the structured nature of training that may pose an over-training risk to younger individuals.

Finally, the landing surface must posses adequate shock absorbing qualities. Good choices include grass, a suspended floor and an exercise mats (not crash mats).

**Sample Plyometric Training Sessions**

Below are sample plyometric training sessions for basketball. You will find more examples in the sport-specific sections of the site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Plyometric Session for Basketball / Volleyball</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depth jumps (with medicine ball throw) 5 x 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single arm throws (medicine ball) 5 x 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single leg vertical jumps 5 x 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead throws (medicine ball) 5 x 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lower Body Plyometric Exercises (Low Intensity)**

**Squat Jumps**

1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, trunk flexed forward slightly with back straight in a neutral position.
2. Arms should be in the “ready” position with elbows flexed at approximately 90°.
3. Lower body where thighs are parallel to ground and immediately explode upwards vertically and drive arms up. Do not hold a squat position before jumping up – keep the time between dipping down and jumping up to a minimum.
4. Land on both feet. Rest for 1-2 seconds and repeat

Prior to takeoff extend the ankles to their maximum range (full plantar flexion) to ensure proper mechanics.
Jump to Box
1. Stand facing box with feet slightly wider than hip-width apart.
2. Lower body into a semi-squat position and immediately jump up onto box. Do not hold a squat position before jumping up – keep the time between dipping down and jumping up to a minimum.
3. Feet should land softly on box. Step back down (not jump back down) and repeat.

Lateral Jump to Box
1. Stand side on to box with feet slightly wider than hip-width apart.
2. Lower body into a semi-squat position and jump up onto box. Do not hold a squat position before jumping up – keep the time between dipping down and jumping up to a minimum.
3. Feet should land softly on box. Step back down (not jump back down) and repeat.

Lower Body Plyometric Exercises (Moderate Intensity)

Split Squat Jumps
1. Stand with feet hip width apart. Take left leg and step back approximately 2 feet standing on the ball of back foot.
2. Feet should be positioned at a staggered stance with head and back erect and straight in a neutral position.
3. Lower body by bending at right hip and knee until thigh is parallel to floor then immediately explode vertically.
4. Switch feet in the air so that the back foot lands forward and vice versa.
Prior to takeoff extend the ankles to their maximum range (full plantar flexion) ensure proper mechanics.
**Tuck Jumps**
1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent, with arms at sides.
2. Jump up bringing knees up to chest.
3. Land on balls of feet and repeat immediately.
4. Remember to reduce ground contact time by landing soft on feet and springing into air.

**Lateral Box Push Offs**
1. Stand to side of box and place the left foot on top of box.
2. Push off the box using the left leg only and explode vertically as high as possible. Drive the arms forward and up for maximum height.
3. Land with right foot on the box and left foot on the ground to the other side of the box.
4. Repeat from this side.

**Bounding**
1. Jog into the start of the drill for forward momentum.
2. After a few feet, forcefully push off with the left foot and bring the leg forward. At same time drive your right arm forward.
3. Repeat with other leg and arm
4. This exercise is an exaggerated running motion focusing on foot push-off and air time.

**Bounding with Rings**
1. Jog into the start of the drill for forward momentum.
2. After a few feet, forcefully push off with the left foot and bring the right leg forward. At same time swing left arm forward and land into the first ring, which is 3-4 feet out and to the left, with the right foot.
3. Continue and repeat with other leg and arm into the second ring, which is now 3-4 feet up and to the right.
4. This exercise is an exaggerated running motion focusing on foot push-off and air time.
**Box Drill with Rings**
1. Stand with feet slightly wider than hip-width apart with your body facing the first ring.
2. Hop forward using both feet and land in first ring.
3. Now hop to the left and land in the ring to the side. Now jump backwards to land in ring behind you. Finish by jumping to your right to land in final ring.
4. Rest and repeat. Remember to keep ground contact time between bounds to a minimum.

**Hurdle Jumps**

**Lateral Hurdle Jumps**
1. Stand beside object to be cleared.
2. Bring knees up and jump vertically but also laterally off ground and over the barrier.
3. Land on both feet and immediately jump the other direction over barrier.
4. Try not to pause between jumps or sink down into a squat position.

**Lower Body Plyometric Exercises (High Intensity)**

**Zigzag Hops**
1. Stand to the left of an agility ladder or similar object approximately 1-2 feet away.
2. Forcefully push off both feet and land the on the other side of the ladder.
3. Repeat and land feet back on the other side, continue repeating and so on down the ladder.
4. Do not "double hop" upon each landing and keep ground contact time to a minimum.
Single Leg Tuck Jump
This is the same as the tuck jump exercise above only one leg is used. Upon landing another jump is performed immediately with minimal ground contact time and with the same leg for the desired number of repetitions. This is repeated for the other leg after a rest period. Single leg plyometric exercises are typically more advanced and require greater strength and balance. They are suitable for sports were a takeoff is completed on one leg.

Single Leg Lateral Hops
1. Start by standing on one leg with your hands on your waist or at your sides.
2. Proceed to hop to the side while maintaining your balance and hop back to the starting position.
3. You can place a rope on the ground or any object on the ground. The object can be small in size and height or large to increase difficulty.
4. Repeat continuously.

Depth Jumps
1. Stand on box with toes close to edge, feet shoulder width apart.
2. Step off (do not jump off) box and land on both feet. Immediately jump up as high as possible and reach up with both hands towards. The jump should be vertical with no horizontal movement.
4. Ground contact time should be short unlike in the diagram. Landing should be soft.**Note:** Start with a box height of 30cm (12in). Intensity can be increased by gradually increasing the box height to a maximum of 107cm (42in) but this is only for experienced athletes with a substantial strength training background.

Upper Body Plyometric Drills
There are several different methods of power training. The simplest is to perform classic weight lifting exercises, such as bench presses, as explosively as possible. The problem with this method is that the barbell has to be decelerated at the end of the movement so the lifter can keep control of it. This inevitable slowing down causes a loss of power. These upper body plyometric drills allow maximum power to be generated because, unlike barbells or dumbbells, the medicine ball can be released into the air.

Plyometric drills can be used to convert an athlete’s maximal strength training into sport-specific power helping to further improve performance.
See the sport specific approach to strength training programs article for more details about how plyometric drills fit into the annual strength and conditioning plan.

Plyometrics has not had the same level of scientific study compared to traditional strength training. As yet there are no definitive guidelines regarding volume, intensity and frequency etc. However, guidelines have been set out by leading authorities in the field. Upper Body Plyometric Drills.

Upper Body Plyometric Drills

Overhead Throws
1. Stand with one foot in front (staggered stance) with knees slightly bent.
2. Pull medicine ball back behind head and forcefully throw ball forward as far as possible into the wall.
3. Catch ball on the bounce from the wall and repeat according to prescribed repetitions. Keep the time between pulling the ball back and starting the throw (transition phase) to a minimum. Can also be completed with a partner instead of a wall.

Side Throws
1. Stand with feet hip-width apart; place left foot approximately one foot in front of right foot.
2. Hold medicine ball with both hands and arms only slightly bent.
3. Swing ball over to the right hip and forcefully underhand toss ball forward to a partner or wall. Keep the stomach drawn in to maximize proper usage of muscle.
4. Catch ball on the bounce from your partner or wall and repeat.

Over Back Toss
1. Stand with feet slightly wider than hip-width apart. Have a partner or trainer stand approximately 10-15 yards behind you.
2. Grasp ball and lower body into a semi-squat position. Explode up extending the entire body and throwing medicine ball up and over the body.
3. The goal is to throw the ball behind you as far as you and generating most of the power in the legs.
4. Catch ball on the bounce from your partner and repeat according to prescribed repetitions.
Slams
1. Stand with feet parallel, shoulder-width apart and knees slightly bent.
2. Pull medicine ball back behind head and forcefully throw ball down on the ground as hard as possible.
3. Catch the ball on the bounce from the ground and repeat according to prescribed repetitions.

Explosive Start Throws
1. Stand with feet slightly wider than hip-width apart.
   Knees should be slightly bent.
2. Pick medicine ball up to chest level.
3. Quickly explode up and press the ball straight out as far and fast as you can.
4. As you press the ball forward explode with either leg so that you actually sprint forward a couple of steps.

Single Arm Overhead Throws
1. Stand with feet slightly wider than hip-width apart.
2. Grasp medicine and lower body into a semi-squat position. Explode up extending the entire body and throwing the medicine ball up into the air.
3. The aim is to throw the ball as high as you can and generating most of the power in the legs.
4. Catch ball on the bounce and repeat.

Squat Throws
1. Stand with feet slightly wider than hip-width apart. Knees should be slightly bent.
2. Hold medicine ball at chest level and squat down to a parallel position.
3. Quickly explode up and jump as high as you can. As you start your jump you should start to shoulder press the ball up and reach full extensions with the arms when you are at the peak of your jump. Push ball as high as possible into the air. Try to minimize the time spent in the squatted position. It should be a quick squat and jump.
4. Catch ball on the bounce and repeat according to prescribed repetitions.
Plyometric Push-Ups
1. Start by getting into a push-up position.
2. Lower yourself to the ground and then explosively push up so that your hands leave the ground.
3. Catch your fall with your hands and immediately lower yourself into a push-up again and repeat.

Courage is the ladder on which all the other virtues mount.
In the final analysis there is no other solution to man's progress but the day's honest work, the day's honest decision, the day's generous utterances, and the day's good deed.

-- Clare Booth Luce

What is important is not what happens to us, but how we respond to what happens to us.

Jean-Paul Sartre

Rare is the person who can weigh the faults of others without putting their thumb on the scale.
So just keep that scale put away and look for peoples strengths.

-- Coach Wilkerson

Here's a little thing that will get you an extra possession or a basket every game or two that I picked that Coach Popovich used to use. I've seen the Spurs do it a couple of times - so clearly he still tells his players.

When we are in that position to save the ball the next closest player to the one making the save sprints to the closet *corner* of that half court. The furthest player sprints towards *our basket*. The player making the save now has two choices to pass the ball and should be able to find a teammate.

You'll be surprised at how quickly your players pick up on the strategy and how many people comment about how *lucky* you are when the ball just happens to bounce your way!

-- Ray Lokar
Too many rules get in the way of leadership. Preserve the latitude to lead.

A real winning attitude is about standards of excellence, which are variable from year to year and from team to team. Being the best you can be, and doing the best you can, are the constants.

If you’re always striving to achieve success that is defined by someone else, you’ll always be frustrated. Define your own success.

Whatever a leader does now sets up what he does later. And there is always a later.

Success is a matter of preparing to win.

Goals should be realistic, attainable, and shared among all members of the team.

Never set a goal that involves number of wins—never. Set goals that revolve around playing together as a team. Doing so will put you in a position to win every game.

Win or lose together.

Believe that the loose ball you are chasing has your name on it.

You cannot win every game. But you can learn from every game.

Don’t let a single game break your heart.

You might have to throw out your well-crafted plan after only five minutes.

When you screw up, admit you are wrong. Apologize in front of the whole team. To admit a mistake is not a weakness, it is a strength.

Look very carefully at the demeanor of your team. Are they healthy, injured, excited, down, energized, or tired?

Ask your team leaders their opinions.

Having fun helps reduce pressure.

Maintain a good sense of humor. You don’t always want your team to see you with furrows in your forehead.
Before you ever utter a word, the team sees your face, the look in your eyes, even your walk. Show the face your team needs to see.

You do not always beat fear with a hug. Sometimes you have to attack the hell out of it.

Never forget a defeat. Defeat can be the key to victory.

At the end of every season, thank your team for their effort.

If something isn’t working, try something new and different. Innovate. Never give up. Never

4 Rules for Outstanding Character  by Rich Czeslawski as passed on to me by my father, Dick Czeslawski

These four rules for life were passed on to me by my favorite coach, my dad. I have tried to follow his lead in my life and adhere to these rules at all times. The older I get and the longer I coach, the more important I realize these rules are. I have been fortunate in my life to have two incredible parents and a multitude of excellent coaches and mentors who have shaped who I am today. I remain fortunate, as I continue to learn from those coaches, my family, my wife, an amazing group of close friends, and my players.

My father’s rules:

Rule #1:
Be where you are supposed to be when you are supposed to be there.

Rule #2:
Always operate as a team player.

Rule #3:
Take responsibility for your actions.

Rule #4:
Never worry alone.

"If your work is becoming uninteresting, so are you. Work is an inanimate thing and can be made lively and interesting only by injecting yourself into it. Your job is only as big as you are."
--George C. Hubbs

"In any moment of decision the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing."
- Theodoro Roosevelt
"You are educated when you have the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or self-confidence." -- Robert Frost

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**Demanding or Praising?**

-- Ettore Messina

One of the most difficult parts of coaching job is to find balance between being demanding and being able to praise players. This is the biggest challenge for every coach. It is especially difficult for me because I'm often too demanding not only towards my players, but towards myself.

Sometimes a player cannot understand why his coach is so harsh and persistent in trying to get something out of him. Personally, I very rarely leave any of my players alone thinking about him «OK, this guy simply cannot do it». Being demanding has one positive aspect. I do believe that my players have the ability to do it, no matter how difficult it might seem at first. But I also understand that some players might be frustrated by my constant requests of high level performance both in the games and during practices.

I heard many people saying that I've always had good players, thus trying to diminish or question my qualities as a coach. In my opinion, to be a good coach I need good, intelligent players. To me, it sums up the essence of my profession.

The system that I had in Virtus, Benetton, National team of Italy and now I have in CSKA is based on what the Americans call «reading the situation and reacting». If you adopt this kind of system, you immediately admit that you need players with two qualities: a) the intelligence to understand what is going on on the court and b) the ability to do it quickly. You also need players who are not afraid of taking responsibility and making decisions on the court.

The ability to read (understand) the situation is not strictly related to player's talent. Once you read the situation, then you need the talent. If you are a talented player and you can dribble, shoot or pass, this gives you more options to do something in reaction to what you see on the court.

If you are an intelligent player, but not so talented, you should know your limitations and try to use your talent just for what you have. For example, if you are a good shooter, but not a great one-on-one player, after reading the situation, you limit yourself to take a good shot if you have time. But if the defense is running towards you, you pass the ball. You don't force yourself to penetrate. Knowing your limitations, playing through them and not putting yourself into situations you cannot solve are the marks of the highest basketball IQ level.

I never evaluate player's decision based on whether the ball goes through the net or not. We mislead the player if we are satisfied because the ball goes in after bad reading and bad
execution. If we do this, the player starts thinking that the only thing that counts is whether the ball goes in, not the ability to read the situation and react in accordance with general rules of our basketball perception. If this happens, it's a tremendous mistake.

On one hand, I know that sometimes I'm too demanding and it may frustrate my players, because it seems like I'm never happy. On the other hand, I can guarantee them that I try to be fair in evaluating their actions on the court: if they read and react properly, according to our concept, I very rarely substitute a player even if he takes two or three good shots and misses them. What scares me is a player shooting because he does not know what to do. Most of the times, it leads to a mistake.

I don't insist that it's the best way to play or coach basketball. It's just my way. However, I respect any other ideas and philosophies. In fact there are many ways, and this is why some players are good for one way or coach and not so good for another.

The main difference between most basketball philosophies lies a) in how much reading of the situation the coach requires and b) to what extent he requires that the reaction of the player would be inline with the options that he gives. It's not a matter of freedom, it's not a matter of better or worse. It's easier for some players to go with less reading and to have limited number of options so that they have fewer chances to get confused.

Sometimes players show us new options thanks to their talent. Great players can create new options, so you have to be ready to pick them up. Here is another problem. Some players are good at reading, but if others are not, you need to do something to coordinate both groups. If the player, who reads the defense and reacts every time in a different way, is not understood by his teammates, he is perceived like a major cause of chaos. Other players simply get confused. So you always have to find the balance in how many options you can let your players have in their reading.

The number of options a player can see depends on his experience and his basketball background. If a player grew up in a system where finding the correct space, correct position on the court and the timing of the action were emphasized, usually, he has a very good ability to read the situation and react. If a player grew up in a strict system, it's more difficult for him.

It works exactly the same way with parents bringing up a child. If a child grows up in a system where taking individual responsibility was emphasized the more he grows up, the more responsibility he takes. It's just a metaphor of life.

This is why thorough selection of players is so important. A player, that may be good for my system, may be not as good for another coach, and vice versa. It's not just a matter of a player fitting in the system, it's also a matter of the system adjusting to the player. This is why I almost never rely on the opinion of other coaches while deciding whether to sign any particular player or not. I'd rather sit and talk with him, and see how he reacts to what I say and how he perceives basketball. All experienced coaches can understand if a player of a certain kind is good for their way of coaching or not.
It explains why some players that had a big role under one coach might find it difficult to have the same role and to perform at the same level under the next coach who takes over the team.

A coach's job is to help his players to learn how to read different situations. Besides that, you can either use your players for what they can do or you can try to improve their abilities. As I coached young players for many years, I do believe you can improve even veteran players and I prove it by doing it even with players who are 30 years old.

However I respect coaches who do differently, because there are some players who believe differently. There are players who prefer to be used for what they are capable to do, because it doesn't break their confidence. Let me give you an example. Imagine you are a good player, maybe a famous player, and I ask you to do something in a different way and you don't manage to do it right. It may break your confidence. You might feel that I'm not using you well, that I'm not helping you.

You need to be strong to play or work for somebody who pushes you to perform well day in and day out, and who rarely praise you for your good job. It's like having a father who is too demanding and keeps saying that you could have done better.

Players, especially young ones and those who grew accustomed to be praised for every slight improvement, might find it difficult to play in my system and would get frustrated by the fact that for me they are never good enough. But there is nothing I can do about it. I cannot force myself to be nice. I prefer to be straightforward.

I realize that sometimes I'm not so good at understanding when my team needs to be supported, to be praised for its efforts even if something is not going the right way. However I've been very lucky as most of my players understood that I rarely praised them for their good results or effort, because I was even more demanding towards myself.

Honestly, I'm almost never satisfied with the way I coach the team. Many people think that when I say something like I said the night after playing with Lottomatica — «it was my responsibility that the team played so badly tonight» — it's just a trick to relieve pressure. But those who have known me for a long time understand that I said exactly what I meant.

I believe that I wasn't doing the right things back then. I didn't prepare my team well. I wasn't able to help them to stay a little bit more relaxed. Due to continuous changes in our roster I, myself, was confused what would be the best options for us. Now I feel that we managed to make sure everybody knows what they have to do.

For example, what Goree does when he's playing with Andersen, especially in offense, differs greatly from what he has to do when he plays with Van Den Spiegel. Van Den Spiegel is a player who always goes inside, and Andersen is a player who might also go outside. So Goree has to adjust his position. But if you don't make it clear to your players and you don't work on this, you might find yourself in a situation when the two will be going out and we'll have nobody inside thus making our offense completely unbalanced. Plus the perimeter players won't know what to
do as they won't have a point of reference inside.

It's all about little things. Everybody knows that there is a psychological chemistry in the team that defines how players relate to each other. But there is also a technical chemistry which is even more important, as it defines how comfortable is for the players to stay on the court together. In the end, all players like to play, have fun and win. So if we don't have a very good technical chemistry, we will find it difficult to stay together and have good relationships.

Sometimes changing positions for one-two meters makes a really big difference. It makes a pass impossible. There was a play with Lottomatica early in the game when JR passed the ball to David Andersen and the ball was intercepted and they had a fast break. When watching the tape, it was clear that the two didn't find right positions because they were not sure where to go. So this is my responsibility to make those things clear, to make the game easier for my players. If I don't make the game easier for them, they might get confused. It's a tremendous responsibility because now their reading ability will be in a terrible danger, it can even be destroyed.

Most of the times I'm not very happy with what I'm doing. Sometimes I even need to force myself not to change the system too often. But there are moments when I need to change it to create the situation for the player. So it's difficult for me to find the balance. The good thing is that my players recognize that I always keep in mind making our team better. It's not that I make changes for the sake of changes.

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What Is a Good Shot….according to Tom Izzo?

He got off topic and began to discuss shot selection player by player. He stood at the right elbow and shared his conversation with one of his players. This player could just as well be one of your players, also.

“What is a good shot?, he challenged the coaches in the audience.

At the right elbow he lets a player shoot 50 jump shots and record the total. If he makes 50% from there and his team must shoot 48-49%, which means the player must make at least 25 shots. But, due to being guarded by a defender that percentage drops to 40%! Is it good shot for that player? NO.

How much do you think about each of your player’s shot selection according to their RANGE? My belief is that a players perceived range is very different than mine. I would tell players that they would have to shoot 60% of their shots unguarded from a spot on the floor to determine their RANGE. Once they can’t make 60% of their unguarded shots, they have hit the END of their RANGE.
I think that coaches are making a mistake to spread out shots so that everyone gets involved. All players have different shooting ranges, so why would you treat them all the same in terms of shot selection.

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**Shot Selection -- Randy Brown**

How would you handle shot selection in junior high and high school? I’ve been pretty strict concerning our shots and where they come from. I also pay attention to who is taking the shots.

But, sometimes I feel like I am restricting my players and they are turning down shots they probably should be taking……...what are your thoughts?

**Answer** — There are many components of offensive basketball for a coach and his players to master. The offensive system dictates ball movement, use of the dribble, spacing, and individual player skills. The goal of every possession is to score points, one, two or three. The responsibility of scoring these points rests solely on someone not even in uniform; the coach!

“How could the coach score points as he sits on the bench”, you say. He doesn’t actually shoot the ball but through his leadership he designs an offensive attack that creates scoring opportunities. Once these opportunities are created, the RIGHT player must take the RIGHT shot. This thinking often separates the good coach from the mediocre one.

We all understand that your best friend or the Superintendent has kids on the team and want you to extend the green light to them on offense. Guess what! The quickest way to be given the green light out of your job is to give the green light to players who can’t score. Make up your mind how you want to play and how your philosophy fits into your specific situation.

The following are crucial considerations for the coach and the quality of shots taken by his team:

1. **Your Offensive System** – The quality and variety of shots your team takes will depend greatly upon the offensive attack you choose. Are you a fast break team that takes quick shots or more of a half-court team? Do you strive to get most of your shots from the paint, mid-range, or from long range? Are you specific in terms of the kind of shots that you want taken, or is your offense an equal opportunity activity? Be clear in your approach to offense because you may be
hurting the bottom line, quality of shots taken, by the offense you are running.

2. **Who Takes the Shots** – This goes back to the “green light” theory of coaching offense. Your team must score points to win, I think we can all agree to that. How you are going to score is a much more complicated predicament. Of the five players on the floor you will probably at best have three good shooters, though most coaches have one or two. How do you determine who can be trusted to shoot the shots to score the points. My advice is to seriously contemplate this issue. You may want to make some important changes to your philosophy and your offensive attack.

3. **Where Do the Shots Come From** – Equally as important as who takes the majority of shots is where on the floor they are taken from. Consider these questions:

   a. Your best post player shoots 67% from the field. Does this mean you let him take ANY shot he likes?

   b. How do you know where on the floor your players are most efficient from? One player may be a 32% field goal shooter, but is 60% when he shoots in the mid-range (8-15 feet). Does he know that and do you know that?

   c. Good shooters can fool coaches because of their ability to hit the three point shot. We tend to give them the green light from anywhere when in fact they are poor from anywhere but three point land.

4. **The Secret** – If you are not a believer in statistics, I would say that the quality of your team’s shot selection is average. Many high school coaches suffer from nagging parents who think their son or daughter should be taking a lot of shots on the team. How can you justify your decision to not allow their son or daughter to shoot in games? Parents want and deserve an answer, and it needs to be a well thought out one.

   The secret is to use statistics in everything you do. A sure fire way to determine the accuracy of a player’s shooting ability is to record every shot they take from the beginning of practice to the end. What you will discover will amaze you. Granted, there is validity in game statistics when everything is on the line. By taking extensive statistics you will begin to see the true picture of shooting mediocrity. You may say, “I don’t have enough people around to take all those stats.”
That may be true, but if you are committed to improving your shot selection and accuracy it is well worth your time and creativity to get it done.

When parents approach you with the age old, “Why don’t you let Johnny shoot?” you will now be armed to educate them on the facts. The hard, cold statistics are always enough to stand on their own and until you take a stand with parents; they will make your job as a coach a real battle.

Analyze your philosophy, your offense, and your shot selection. A small improvement may lead to great results.

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“The important thing is this: To be ready at any moment to sacrifice what you are for what you could become.” --Charles Dubois

EVERYONE WHO PASSES THROUGH THIS DOOR
BRINGS HAPPINESS.
SOME WHEN THEY ENTER,
SOME WHEN THEY LEAVE.

"Thoughts are what you want. Actions are what you get." --Dr. Rob Gilbert