

John Beilein

1. Guys that shoot 40% or better and shoot a lot, have to be kept track of defensively. There are a lot of 35-38% shooters out there, but guys that shoot over 40% and shoot a lot are “lights out” type of shooters and require special defensive attention.
2. Sometimes you score more when you slow down the tempo. It’s not when you shoot, but whether it’s a good shot or not. Sometimes you also have to slow the game down just to set the defense.
3. If a guy is feeling it and making his shots, we want him to keep shooting. When kids get into a “zone”, you have to let them go. That’s sort of the rule we have. You have to shoot when you are hot and when you are open. As a coach, you have to learn to let them go when they’re feeling it.
4. We want people to walk away from our games – win or lose – and say, “This was fun to watch.” We try to play entertaining basketball that people enjoy.
5. If you are playing hard, you should be tired at the end of a half or the game.
6. When you shoot well, you are difficult to defend.
7. We frequently get out-rebounded. It’s all about possessions. If you take control of the ball and value it, you can win with smaller, skilled guys who don’t rebound well. We simply aren’t going to beat anyone off the board.
8. Good people are not selfish. When there is a sincere love for your teammate and want him to do well, then passing the ball is not a problem. A basic rule of basketball is to shoot when you are open and pass when you are not. Who is more open?
9. Guys are more apt to pass to a shooter and a shooter is more apt to shoot.
10. A center that makes 3-pointers is an absolute treasure.
11. There has to be a confidence in each other and in what we do. Our guys know that sometimes our offense and our defense will not work in a game, but it will work more often than not. So, you have to have confidence and stay with it.
12. We recruit players that can play multiple positions. Versatility is very important to us.
13. If you score 70 points, you usually win in college basketball.
14. The notion that “you win by the 3, you lose by the 3” is not necessarily true. How many teams can win when they shoot as poorly as we did from the 3 point line? The 3-pointers are a very important part of our offense, but you still have to play good defense and handle the ball in order to win.
15. The statistics I look at are: 3-point FG%, number of assists, turnovers, total baskets made and rebounding.
16. Sloppy basketball is playing in such a way that you are throwing the ball around the gym, not when you miss shots. Missing shots is simply missing shots.
17. We don’t go out and say that we have to hold opponents under a certain number of points.

18. As a coach you try to anticipate how teams are going to play you. The first 5 minutes of every game are very interesting for our staff as we determine what they are doing against us.
19. Freshmen have to learn to play at a much higher intensity level than they are used to in high school. Usually a player learns that from the seniors.
20. Typically, we play 4 games in 14 days, not 5 games in 12 days like we have. Rest is important.
21. Having a great March run like we had last year gives our players confidence that they are good players.
22. Playing good teams in hostile environments helps you down the road.
23. We like to go down the stretch with the guys who have done it before. Experienced seniors are the key.
24. We've had several games where the opponents had three days prep and we had two, or they had two and we had one. But, you can't make excuses – you always have to fight through things. It's impossible to always have the same number of prep days, so I'm not complaining.
25. Good instincts are very important in our defense, as is having long arms and getting your hand on the ball. Then being in good position to do those things.
26. The key is mental toughness. They have seniors and we have seniors, so who is going to withstand it? We were on a mission in the 2nd half and we needed to be.
27. Our game preparation is never more than one day. We like those “get better” days when we work on getting better at the things we do. Normally we spend half the practice on the opponent and then have a walk-through the day of the game. Sometimes you worry so much about stopping them that you can't run any of your things well.
28. A player has to be very careful and can't let his last shot affect his next shot, especially when he's getting good looks. That last shot is history.
29. When good shooters are closely guarded, they have to work a little harder over and over again to get their good looks.
30. Mental toughness is our only edge. And we can't lose it, even for a 4 minute stretch in a game because it can cost you. What about when that other team is really challenging you and distracting you? We just cannot give in.
31. We are playing at a high level and that's all we can ask for. We just have to hope the breaks go our way.
32. A shooter has to get out of a shooting funk by maintaining poise and keep shooting.
33. When you don't shoot well from the field, you have to turn the other team over to help your scoring.
34. Everyone is fatigued at this time of the year and you have to find ways to get the job done.
35. When you get good looks and miss, so you shoot them again and again until you make them.
36. The way we all watch tape on each other and guard each it is important to have one or two guys who don't need a play to score. The guys who can get you a basket on their own without much help.

37. Our zone works best when the other team has some selfish guys who are not tall so they can't pass over us.
38. In trying to get into the NCAA as an at-large a good loss is better than a bad win. Yet, we don't ever talk about moral victories.
39. It is very hard for us to get easy baskets. It's advantageous to get 10-12 offensive rebounds that lead to 4-5 easy baskets or just throw the ball up to the rim to somebody. Teams like this play a vertical game. The higher the ball is in the air, the greater their advantage. We're just not going to have that kind of advantage. Teams with guys like that usually have a very simple approach to the game.
40. It's never one thing in a game. It's always a combination of little things.
41. For us it is not about beating the #1 team, it is about getting better every day. We're not worried about March. We're worried about getting better. We'll learn from this game.
42. Even in a loss you can gain confidence.
43. After every game there is always someone on your team who is questioning his confidence. It's like dr. Phil around here. Players have to trust themselves and not themselves.
44. With one day to prepare between games, we went live for 16 minutes before today and that may have been too much. Next time we won't even break a sweat with the guys who played a lot. We will just walk-through stuff.
45. Always see challenges as opportunities.
46. Our offensive style is to adapt to the talent we have and recruit to the style we like most. Some years we throw the ball inside and others we crank threes. We do whatever is best to win. We value the ball and assists – we're normally among the leaders in the country in both areas. We like versatile players who play a lot of positions.
47. We like great kids who never quit and who just play no matter what. We like low maintenance young men remembering they all need help. Everyone needs someone there to help them. Want kids who can concentrate on basketball and still have their priorities straight. I value players that fit-in with the student body, but who also are close with their teammates. Don't want players who are on an island. Want our students to come out and watch their friends play, not to watch the team play. Want unselfish players who love to play together. Want players who work hard, who love their teammates and who want a family situation. These are the things that make coaching a lot easier. There's no magic formula – just a feel for how we want to do it.
48. We have prided ourselves on having self-motivated players and teams who are self-starters. You give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, you teach them to fish and you feed them for a lifetime. We want to teach them to fish. We pride ourselves on giving guys a plan with goals and things to work on over the summer. They are expected to achieve those goals and if they don't, they will get to know the running track very well.
49. You have to recruit your current players every day to become better players.
50. Our goals are to do our best and get better each day.
51. You are in the wrong business if you think that people are not going to have high expectations. That's why coaches get paid what they do.

IN BEILEIN'S BOOK: Rules, drills -- and when not to brag

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BY MARK SNYDER

FREE PRESS SPORTS WRITER

ATLANTA -- John Beilein was making a beeline for his next stop.

In the whirlwind of a Final Four weekend, still recharging from West Virginia's NIT championship in New York two days earlier, Beilein was set to make a presentation titled "West Virginia Basketball" on the second floor of the Atlanta Hilton on Saturday morning.

Racing from a National Association of Basketball Coaches ethics meeting, Beilein was already late for his 11:15 a.m. presentation, and half the large parlor was filled with eager-eyed coaches, tapping their feet.

Yet just outside the room, the 54-year-old man who is will be introduced today as Michigan's next basketball coach came to a dead stop to shake hands and chat with a veteran basketball mind from days past.

Dressed in his pewter West Virginia warm-ups, complete with the Nike swoosh, Beilein stepped to the front of the room and was introduced by a New York high school coach whom he has known for years.

That's when Beilein stepped in front of the stage and podium and tried to relate.

"Mind if I stand here?" he asked, shunning the microphone, admitting he vividly recalled his first job like those listening, coaching a junior varsity high school team in 1975. "I just want you to know I planned to have notes, but I was a little busy this week."

And that was the last comment he made about his team's success.

For 45 minutes he opened the floor to questions, and each time his life's focus burst through.

"It would have been easy for him to come in and talk about his team and how special that team was, being picked so low in the Big East and winning the NIT," said Akron assistant coach Lamont Paris, one of the few college coaches in the room that day.

"A lot of guys would have taken the opportunity to do that. It was more trying to educate those guys to get them to abide by the NCAA rules. The NABC is trying to push that. I don't think they told him to say that. But you can tell he abides by them."

Beilein spent the first 25 minutes of the presentation discussing rules -- with surprisingly little lecture. The bulk of the talk was presenting real-life examples and how Beilein deals with them -- like slowly backing away from a mother who wants to hug, a potential NCAA violation.

"We're trying to steer the ethics of coaching basketball," Beilein told the group. "There is a right way to do this. Remember, it's all about the spirit of the rule. The problem is, many of you don't know any better."

That's where he filled them in. Yet the preaching never arrived. Despite his reputation for toeing the line, Beilein didn't judge his peers who don't follow the same code. He just explained his standard.

Like the time a high school coach approached him during a non-contact evaluation period. Beilein said they couldn't talk, and the coach responded that so-and-so had talked to him just a week before. The simple answer: That's not right, but it's that coach's business.

"Part of that came from because he just left the meeting with the ethics committee," said Romulus High coach Nate Oats, who has two former players on U-M's roster -- Jerret Smith and Ron Coleman -- and sat through Saturday's speech. "As he said, a lot of the rule-breaking can be reduced if high school coaches were informed."

But the masses were there to hear about Beilein's coaching acumen, and few left disappointed.

"I don't show videos," Beilein said about his clinics. "But we can talk."

The talk riveted the audience, from his explanation that his players must run a 5:30 mile each fall or they don't play -- for former Mountaineer star Kevin Pittsnogle "I started the clock and waited 10 seconds," Beilein joked -- to his explanation of drills.

For the most part, that's the area that enthralled these coaches, who are well aware of Beilein's dues-paying rise up the coaching ladder, from the high school job through six college spots before the job at U-M. Though he didn't diagram his remarkably efficient offense, he used the time to talk about the 50 three-pointers-in-five-minutes drill, the one that he insists has made his players better shooters -- a theory some coaches don't embrace.

"He also shared some good drills with those high school coaches, and I took a couple of those, too," Paris said. "The one thing he said was he gives them 10 goals; they have to complete eight, and one was to smile more. It's simple and one thing every kid can do. He's right in believing that's going to make a more positive program."

These may be the plans that sold Michigan athletic director Bill Martin on Beilein's approach.

"He's got more energy than people realize, and he's going to come in and get after it," said Oats. "It sounds to me like some people are not wanting to give him a chance because he's older. If he gets the right staff in here and he's passionate, the big thing about recruiting is letting kids know you want to win. He'll do that."

When the speech ended because time was running short, Beilein offered to stay as long as there were questions. And, for the next 20 minutes, the high school coaches wanted to shake his hand.

So he waited, laughed and enjoyed the dialogue.

"I don't know how many coaches you find that will preach it publicly and hold themselves to that same standard and practice," Paris said. "He has developed a belief and sticks to it religiously."