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CONTENT...

The content is the what we watch as coaches and the what we want to show our players. Again there is a stark difference in WHAT we as coach must familiarize ourselves with and WHAT we must expose our players to seeing so we will again look at it from the two perspectives as we talk through this section.

From a Coach's Perspective

Coaches must be know it all's. The more information we can gather the better our decisions will be. We discussed in depth in the INTENT section the value of building trust in our players through making proper decisions over time. The best way to gain this valuable information is with your own two eyes through watching film. Film of your practices. Film of your games. Film of your opponent. Film on your favorite teams. Film on the teams of your favorite coaches. Film on your favorite players. Film on your players favorite players. Film on men's teams. Film on women's teams... and the list goes on. My point here is that there are limitless resources to help you gain information. You have to find the balance on what works best for you.

I personally am one of those coaches who don't want to leave a stone unturned. With that said, I have lost many games to coaches who watched a single film on my team. That's what makes this game so great. There are lots of ways to accomplish the same thing.

My argument is that over the course of time (and maybe 100) games being a "no stone unturned guy" pays off. It might not help you win each and every game but it's been my experience that the more information you have at your disposal the better your split second decision making will be. Still, I am not going to try and convince anyone that it is the ONLY way.

So I will list WHAT I have watched over the years. You can then decide if any of it works for you and your situation. Also, if you have things you watch that are not on this list, I would love to hear your suggestions.

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OUR PRACTICE FILM: *This is my most valuable resource. This is where we have the most control over situations and is also the film we have the most volume of to work with. You can see team play and individual play simultaneously. Too many young coaches think they can see it all in real time during live practice. That simply isn't possible no matter how good you are. Your brain can not function like that (and if it does you need to start searching for the cure for cancer or figure out how to balance our nation's budget). I am not telling you that I re-watch every second of every workout we have, but I do pick out portions of practice that we have a particular focus on and make sure I study it clipping any sections that can be used later with our team or in individual players sessions. Things I have clipped in the past week:*

- *poor spacing/good spacing*
- *poor transition defense/good transition defense*
- *poor shot selection/good shot selection*
- *poor communication/good communication*
- *poor execution/good execution*
- *poor effort on the glass/good effort on the glass*
- *poor teammate actions/ good teammate actions*
- *poor moving on air time of pass/ good moving on air time of a pass*
- *poor body language/ good body language*
- *poor awareness/ good awareness*
- *poor execution of fundamentals/ good execution of fundamentals*
- *poor closeouts/ good closeouts*

The clips are usually a result of something we have emphasized that day, but in using film early in the season to point out as many things as possible will help you build the trust in your players. After about a week of practice, players no longer question what you are saying to them because they know you have watched it on film and they begin to blindly trust you. That is surrender. And when you have surrender you have BUY-IN. And when you have BUY-IN you have a valuable tool.

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OUR GAME FILM: *Win or lose, you need to see your games on film. Sometimes it's painful but never have I watched a game that I didn't notice something that I missed in the game.*

After a win, I usually find that we didn't play as well as I had thought. After a loss, I usually find that we didn't play as poorly as I had thought. That's one reason I try not to be too emotional in the locker room win or lose.

Game film like practice has endless things you can look for and clip to show other coaches and your team. But the biggest difference for me in practice and game film is that I must watch the game RAW. I don't want it clipped. I want to see everything. I want to see the bench reactions to baskets and good plays. I want to see players communicating during substitutions. I want to see what my point guard is doing with dead-clock time. I want to detect any patterns in our play that I would normally miss if we had clipped the game into offense/defense.

Game film is a valuable tool in helping us determine as coaches what we need to address with more time (or less time) in our preparations.

With the technology of 2012 it is easily possible to log your games as you watch them. On a shoestring budget you can utilize a spreadsheet to keep up with a litany of things. Our log is 52 items. From this log, I can then quickly pull clips into a short edit to illustrate a desired result. With a good logging format you can save hours and hours throughout the season when you decide to show a player all of their shot attempts, all of their turnovers, all of their assists, etc. It takes a little time on the front end but keeps you from having to re-watch hours of film later to find what you want.

Other things I keep a log of:

- *Blooper Tape: funny things happen so show them to them in a reel so they don't laugh during a tense time*
- *ESPN Play of the Day Reel: highlight plays we make in games in Countdown format from Sportcenter*
- *Great plays made by position to show future players that play that spot*
- *Set play actions that lead to scores*
- *Late game library of situations and what we do*
- *BOB and SLOB plays that score or we get scored on*

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OUR OPPONENT GAME FILM: *This is not meant to be a piece on SCOUTING because so much more goes into that than just film, but this section will have some aspects of game preparation.*

When I start preparing for an upcoming opponent, the first film I choose is always a film against the team that is MOST like our team. I don't start with their most recent film. I realize you might be limited in film available depending on your situation, but with this rule (superstition) I know if the worst case scenario happens and it's the ONLY film I get to view, at least I have a chance to get the best possible information possible. Again with opponent film, I want to see it raw and unedited. With the first film on the screen I can expect to spend from 2 to 3 hours with this film. I take notes chronologically. This helps me chart flow of the game and later when I am several films in, patterns may develop. I am noting actions, set plays, player actions, special situations, free throw alignment, who is the BOB in bounder, who throws it in on a make, how do they guard ball screens, who scores/when do they score/where do they score, play calls, defensive switches, substitution patterns, who are their role players and what are those roles, and anything else that jumps out to me.

The 2nd film onto the screen is against the opponent that is next most like our style of play. This film takes about half the time. Still noting things, but there are fewer to note as many of them are repetition from the previous film. It is during this film that player actions are becoming tendencies. (too many coaches watch one film and pronounce it to their team that a player has a tendency to do this or that. Tendencies occur over time not a single occasion). The 2nd film will almost also produce a few new set actions and BOB plays.

3rd film the last of the teams most like us. Usually this tape plays through without being paused very often. Notes are fewer and more detailed. Tendencies are taking shape. Patterns are beginning to show in substitutions and set play calls. New things really stand out. A lot of times I am beginning to be able to predict things that are about to happen.

The next film in my stack is from a game our opponent either didn't play well or lost. This tape shows me things other teams did to be disruptive to their game plan. It shows me things a coach or player might do differently when they are behind rather than being ahead. You can still be confirming patterns and tendencies but you might also be adding a few new things to your notes. This film might take 40 minutes it might take an hour.

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At this point of the scouting process I usually stop watching film and do the written report that we share with other coaches and an abbreviated version that we share with players. But since this isn't a piece on scouting I will continue in speaking on opponent film. After I have completed the written report, I go back and watch games from most recent to oldest order. Most of these are watched in FF speed, stopping only when something I didn't anticipate happens. Between this time and tip off, I want to see every second of film that I can so that I can be best prepared. I want to have as much knowledge as possible and have seen as many situations as possible so that if I am asked a question during the game I can provide the best answer possible. I never want to guess. It's not that I will ALWAYS be correct, I know that I won't be. But I want all of the information there is backing any suggestion I might make, win or lose.

OTHER FILM: This usually occurs in the off or pre-season when more time permits. I will watch games that were DVR'ed from the college season. I especially love watching games from the men's and women's NCAA Tournament. I will also record NBA games. They run some of the best sideline action and end of game action because there are so many close games and because they advance the ball to the front court on timeouts. This year the Olympics provided another opportunity to see very contrasting styles from around the globe. With technology and satellite dishes your options here are basically up to how much you can handle.

To wrap up from a Coach's perspective, I feel you have to find the level of what makes you comfortable and confident. This varies widely among friends and colleagues. With experience each coach finds that balance.

From a Player's Perspective

I don't want this to sound simplistic, but from a players perspective, you need to give a player everything we just mentioned but in a smaller dose. In my experience players don't want or need as much information as coaches need. They need just enough to be prepared but not so much that they become paralyzed by overload. They need to watch practice film of themselves. They need to see game film of their efforts. They need to watch clips of their upcoming opponents. They need to see clips of players they could be assigned to guard. But they don't need hours and hours of it. They need minutes and minutes.

The content is the same for coaches and players but the amount can NOT be.

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Players do vary here like coaches. It's almost like a bell curve. A very, very small percentage of players can function at a very high level watching little or no film. Amber Harris at Xavier was one of those players. She was able to talk verbal coaching better than anyone I have ever been associated with. She could FEEL things. She could SENSE things. She didn't have to see it on film to believe her coaches. She didn't have to see it on film to be prepared come tip-off. On the other end of the curve lay another rare player. A player like Allison Curtin who could watch the same amount of film I could watch (and sometimes more) without losing her edge. I would give Allison the same video all the other players received plus a packet that always included at least three full games and she wanted a copy of our game or practice before she left the gym at night. In the middle lay the other 95% of players.

We rarely ever show our team video that is more than 15 minutes in length. One reason is that attention spans seem to be reduced every single season thanks to our social media, IY generation, of speaking in 140 characters or less. The other is that if you can't make your point in less than that you probably have bigger problems that film will never solve.

During the pre-season, we will have one day a week that we will show film from practice sessions we have had until that point. We will discuss in future piece the moment that we show the film and the environment we show it in, but for now, we will just say that we show things we want to emphasize or improve upon.

In season, we will use our film room time to show positives and negatives from games again focusing on things we need to see as a team.

In preparation for a game, we have 30 minutes the day prior to the game that we use to read through our written scouting report and watch an accompanying video that we limit to 10 minutes. The video supports the written report.

In this film we are very specific in our presentation (some say superstitious) but regardless it's a formula we are comfortable with and one that has not changed in 8 years regardless of the caliber of opponent, the amount of turnaround time, or the magnitude of the game.

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This ten minute video starts with player personnel with their most dangerous players first proceeding to the last role player that is expected to see action. We show just enough clips to demonstrate the players abilities/ tendencies but don't show 37 clips of the hitting step back threes or 42 of them crossing someone over. After each player has been covered the video turns to team play. We emphasize being great in transition defense so the first thing we always show is how an opponent likes to attack on missed shots and turnovers. We then show half court actions. Most games we show the 3 best actions our opponents score from. On occasion there is a team that has more than 3 and I can't remember ever showing more than 5. Next is our best guess at how our opponent will play defense on us. This would include half court and full court attacks. We close the video with bounds situations and any other special situations.

Other forms of film that have been valuable with players have been:

-Blooper Reels: we discovered this by accident but has been very valuable to our overall approach to film. By showing a blooper reel every once in a while, we found our players aren't looking for funny things during a normal film session when humor isn't welcome. The players know if something funny happens they will eventually see it when the time is right.

- Coaches Playing days: Once at Xavier we were mired in a two game losing streak when we called our players into an impromptu film session. They were convinced this was about to be the worst film session in history as a result of the losing streak. Instead when the video started, it was vintage footage of our coaching staff from our playing days. Short shorts and mullets. Big bangs and out of dated shoe styles. After 15 minutes there wasn't a dry eye (from laughing so hard) and our team went on a 23-game winning streak ending in the NCAA Elite 8.

- Movie clips. Most of your players are inspired by movies and television shows. Showing clips from them are sometimes a nice way to motivate without having to give a speech of your own. Finding the ones to fit your situation is the key but you can easily find ready made ones on youtube.com.

In the end, ANYTHING you can show your players to improve, prepare, or inspire a player is good in my book. You know your own team better than anyone. Trust your feel and as always, do what is best for your team.