

# Yearly Discipline Ideas

Welcome to newsletter #6 in our series of ideas for coaches. Sundance Wicks has prepared this one on the merit of players using notebooks on a year long basis. We got this idea from Paul Brown of the NFL Cleveland Browns. He was a coach who was decades ahead of his time and developed most of the ideas currently employed by NFL coaching staffs. Many a Hall of Fame coach studied under Paul Brown and all of us use his ideas whether we know it or not.

“Most players stop their development because of their intelligence or lack there of rather than their physical ability.”

- Paul Brown

## **DO YOU WANT TO BE A STUDENT OF THE GAME?**

I have been involved with the Northern State University Men’s Basketball Team for five years now. Four of which I was playing under Don Meyer and this year being an assistant with the coaching staff here at Northern. Since the first day I stepped onto this campus I have not stopped taking notes. I am here to give my personal testimony on how **invaluable** note taking is. My senior project for the program was to type my season notebook with the Wolves. It was 115 pages long and covered everything that happened my senior year.

Every year our players get a copy of it to look at and examine one way of the many ways there are to take notes. Every person has a different tactic in taking notes. To put it plain and simple there is no wrong way to take notes. Covered in the player notebook are topics that range from team meetings, to notes on practices, to notes on my teammates strengths and weaknesses, game reflections, halftimes of games, community projects, addresses of people who needed our teams support, Meyerisms, quotes from numerous coaches, and ways to help us succeed in life. Everything is in chronological order so I could go back and see what happened in a game against an opponent the last time we played them. I really believe that by writing down ideas that the coaches saw or thought of increased my ability to think critically while watching games. I started to actually study games instead of just watching them. Now more than ever do I believe that our program is not just about developing fundamentally and mentally strong student athletes, but about developing all-around and well-rounded human beings.

**Define student: a learned person; someone who by long study has gained mastery in one or more disciplines.** Let’s take a closer and more in-depth look at what it means to become a student of the game of basketball. By just breaking down the definition of a student we can find key words and phrases that point us in the right direction of becoming a better student of the game. Words like “**mastery**”, as well as short phrases like “**learned person**” and “**long study.**” We are always asking the question of how we can become more knowledgeable in the game of basketball. Coaches go to clinics or academies to learn from the best and try to get all the good ideas,

knowing very well that they won't be able to use all of them. Still, the main focus is knowing that there is more than one way to skin a cat and we should never limit ourselves in scope. So the real question is how do we retain all of this information that is being provided by all the generous coaches in the world?

A coach should be a **learned person**; somewhere down the line you as a coach have developed your own unique style of coaching and methodology of teaching from years of studying the game (**long study**). By **long study** we mean, that you as a coach have paid your dues. You have been taught the game from many different people; some you consider close mentors and others just outside influences. You have studied other programs and compared them to ones you have been involved with and programs you have headed up yourself. Your job now is to teach your players what you have learned and what you are learning. We are all constantly learning; just some people are in a more advanced stage of learning and have the ability to share what they know, with people who are eager to learn.

We all gain knowledge differently, but there is one common trait that the 500 most successful CEO's shared. They all took very detailed notes. It cannot hurt to equip your players with a three ring binder that your players fill in with your team's concepts, plays, rotations etc. It can only help them learn quicker and more efficiently. Would you take a knife to a gun fight? Would you go to a coaching academy or clinic without a notebook, pen or pencil? Both are rhetorical questions, but they hit on a good point. Most coaches do bring a notebook and pen to write down the thoughts of other coaches. It is one of the most effective tools in helping a person retain information. Not just because you write it down, but because you can review it.

The next question is, if you consider yourself a teacher of the game, why would you not have your players bring notebooks to meetings or practice sessions to write down the concepts that your program stresses. Do you just expect them to memorize what you are telling them? What you are teaching is important? If they cannot remember what you are emphasizing, that will affect your team's chances of accomplishing what you want in games. Do your players need to be constantly reminded in practice where to go, what to do and how to do it? Writing it down is a review process in itself and it helps coaches teach more effectively. There is no need to reinvent the wheel every time you are teaching.

If a player has a question about something in the program it should already be in his/her notes. It also lets you as a coach know what your players think is important and how well your players grasp the note taking concept. You can check their notes by simply having your players turn in their notebooks to you. Players start to take pride in their notebooks and you will find them reflecting on topics covered if they are really serious about learning the game. It becomes a matter of you as the coach, teacher, leader equipping them with the tools; they just have to use them. "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." It doesn't stop on the court though. You are also providing your players with an effective tool that can help them be successful in the classroom, on the basketball court and in the real world.

To be a **master** is to have total control over somebody or something. No one will ever have total control over another being, you can only control you. But we can have control over some thing, for example, our minds. By developing the habit of taking notes we are constantly increasing our chances of retaining information that is important.

You decide what and how much of it you want to write down and how often you want to review it. You are a **master** of your own mind, everybody is. **Mastery** is a constant process and will never be fully completed, but we can strive for it. Hence, we should never be satisfied with the amount or level of knowledge we are at. Nobody else controls the amount of knowledge you can gain. The perception of being a **master** is different for everyone, but we can all develop a thought process that can try and help you obtain the unattainable. That thought process is the idea of “Kaizen” constant improvement or lifelong learning.

RESPECT THE ELDERS  
TEACH THE YOUNG  
COOPERATE WITH THE PACK

PLAY WHEN YOU CAN  
HUNT WHEN YOU MUST  
REST IN BETWEEN

SHARE YOUR AFFECTIONS  
VOICE YOUR FEELINGS  
LEAVE YOUR MARK

**WE LEARN.....**

10% OF WHAT WE READ  
20% OF WHAT WE HEAR  
30% OF WHAT WE SEE  
50% OF WHAT WE BOTH SEE AND HEAR  
70% OF WHAT IS DISCUSSED WITH OTHERS  
80% OF WHAT WE EXPERIENCE PERSONALLY  
95% OF WHAT WE **TEACH** TO SOMEONE ELSE

There can be no happiness  
if the things we believe in  
are different from the things  
we do.....Freya Madeline Stark  
Travel Writer  
1893-1993

