

Sports Center Sound Bites- Part I

Sometimes coaches rant. When they do it usually makes it to ESPN's Sports Center, You Tube, and in some cases even may end up in a commercial. Who can forget Jim Mora's famous "playoffs" rant? While these rants may be sound great sound bites for Sports Center, they often contain valuable information for you.

Former Texas Tech and current Washington State coach Mike Leach has been known to rant a time or two, as has LSU's Les Miles. According to the Seattle Times, Leach recently responded to allegations of abuse in his program that were made by one of his wide receivers.

"We're a team that's comfortable with participating instead of being truly competitive," he said. "It needs to mean a great deal to us whether we win or lose."

Then he called for an increased level of program toughness.

"If a player doesn't like the way something is going, he can quit. Or go find him a team where they don't coach very hard, or where lackadaisical effort is allowed."

"People don't join football or coach football to see people go out and be lazy. If they wanted it to be comfortable, they wouldn't call it football. They'd call it cuddling."

This was not the first time Leach has been accused of using abusive tactics in his coaching nor was it the first time that he has ranted. Some may call his You Tube rants famous, others may say infamous. Based upon the number of views, people are listening. It was during one particular Leach rant that wasn't exactly G rated where I believe he accurately nailed down three of the simplest, yet most critically important goals for any team.

"What are our three goals?" he hollered across a silent locker room.

"Be a team! Be the most excited to play! Be the best at doing your job!"

Then he added, *"They beat us on all three. They didn't win the game, but they beat us on all three!"*

Let's look at each of these goals. One- Be a team. University of Texas baseball coach Augie Garrido once said, *"The success of the team empowers the individual. It never works the other way around."*

Two- Be the most excited to play. Legendary basketball coach Bobby Knight once said that enthusiasm is the single most important trait that he looks for in a player. It was Knight's opinion that it didn't matter if a player was the most talented player in the world, if he'd rather be sitting somewhere in the sixth row than be on the court.

Three- Be the best at doing your job. In the New York Rangers locker room a picture hangs. It was taken just as time expired in game 7 of the 1994 Stanley Cup Final. Mark Messier is ecstatic and seen jumping in the air in sheer jubilation. In order to end their fifty four year “curse,” the Rangers had to win a defensive zone faceoff with 1.7 seconds left before the final buzzer sounded. What is noteworthy about that photo is not NHL Hall of Famer Mark Messier celebrating in the foreground. In the background, right winger Steve Larmer is seen still pinning one of the Vancouver Canucks against the boards. Time had expired, the game and the Stanley Cup had been won, but there was Larmer just doing his job. He wasn’t fixated on the outcome or celebrating prematurely. He was fixated on executing his job whether it was for just one second or for sixty minutes.

The next time your team goes into competition, do not think about the scoreboard and do not think about your opponent. Think about winning a competition that relates only to the goals of being a team, being the most excited to play, and being the best at your job. Yes, ranting always seems to involve theatrics, drama, and controversy. Sometimes there is brilliance in ranting. Yes, it is valuable to you!