

Coaching Philosophy

Coach Bear Bryant

Men, I would like to open by reading you something that I believe in. It is: "The Price of Success"

What is the Price of Success?

It is Simple....To use all of your Courage, to Force Yourself to Concentrate on the Problem in Hand, to Think of it Deeply and Constantly, to Study it from all Angles, and to Plan. To have a High and Sustained Determination to put over what you plan to Accomplish, but in Spite of all Adverse Circumstances which may Arise -- And nothing Worthwhile has ever been Accomplished without some Obstacle Overcome.

To Refuse to Believe that there are any Circumstances sufficiently strong to Defeat you in the Accomplishment of your Purpose. HARD? I Should Say So! That is why so many Men never Attempt to Acquire Success. They Answer the Siren Call of the Rut and Remain on the Beaten Path for Beaten Men. Nothing Worthwhile has ever been Achieved without Constant Endeavors, some pain, and Constant Application of the Lash of Ambition. That's the PRICE OF SUCCESS.

Every Man should ask Himself: Am I Willing to Endure the Pain of this Struggle for the Comforts and the Rewards and the Glory that go with Accomplishment? Or Shall I Accept the Uneasy and Inadequate Contentment that comes with Mediocrity? Am I Willing to Pay the PRICE OF SUCCESS?

Prayer - I assure that most of you are high school coaches - I have great, great respect for high school coaches because I think that they're the heart, the blood and the guts of football today. I think more so today than any other time. I'll always regret that I never had the opportunity to work in high school, because I know and feel like

I could have contributed more. I'm not here to try to sell you on anything. I'm here to talk about football and some of the experiences I've had, the mistakes I've made, hoping you won't make some of the same ones.

First, I would like to ask is coaching your job, or is it your way of life? I feel like coaching is my life and always has been. If coaching gets to be a job, and you want to do something else, then don't continue coaching. To be in the coaching business, you must have a goal or an objective. My goal has always been winning. But regardless of what my goal is its important to me in how I go about attaining this goal. I don't think anything can happen by accident; you make it happen. If you want to make it happen, the first thing you have to do is have a plan. A plan you believe in so strongly that you never compromise.

I think then the next step depending on whether you're an assistant or head coach, is to try people. I haven't ever seen a coach make bad, I've never seen them make good, you have to have a team, you have to have people. You have to hire people that football means a great deal to. Winning means everything to. I think when we hire people, not only do they believe our way, but they have to believe in our plan. Now if you're a head coach and love it, I think employing a staff with the right people is virtually important, it has got to mean alot to them. They have to believe in your plan. Some good rules I've always had is that for all the people on my staff, I want them to be brighter than I am, I want them to be able to speak up and also to express themselves. It is also highly important to keep ther

happy and to motivate them. I think its important to recognize their contributions because everybody likes recognition. I like to recognize their ideas in front of the squad; it gives him prestige and makes them a bigger man in the eyes of the squad. I like to, after we win a game, to recognize each member of my staff, individually, by name, to the press, T. V. media. It gives them an incentive and makes them want to do better and I think this is very, very important.

Next thing to have is people to play. I think that it is very important at any level, especially for college coaches who are able to recruit. In high school, you can only get what you get. The 1st thing you want to do is to try the players together that football means an awful lot to them. You want to try the players that are willing to pay the price, and build up to them; not necessarily players with ability though you want ability, but players who are winners and that believe in your plan. The players that work and sacrifice and discipline themselves, not because we want them to but because they know that it takes discipline to win; and because they want what they can take pride in.

Some players want to be like other students, but I don't want players who want to be like other students. I want players who are out there to win. I want ones who take pride in doing without some of the things other students are doing. If he does that I think we have a chance to win. I think its very important to recognize winners and get them in the ball game, it doesn't matter what size they are or color they are; you need to recognize the people with ability.

I think you want to try the leaders whether it is the coaches or players. We need to sell them on work

sacrifice and discipline if we sell them on this fact that if they do this they will win; they'll not only win, they will learn lessons through later life, lessons that are hard to teach in the church, home, or school room. They will become better prepared to make a living in all areas of life, spiritual, mental, physical. If we can do this, then we're in business. What I would like to suggest, 1st of all, we hope to adapt our system to what the player can do. We have to have a system of offense and defense of what the players can do. We try to recruit players that go with our system, if we don't we have to change to something the players can do. Four or five years ago we changed to the wishbone because that's what kind of players we had and I think it paid off. Now again, if you find the winner, find the place for him, get him in the ball game. I've been critized by my own players and by other people for moving players around; but when the need calls for it, sometimes theres no way around it.

Again, its good to pass out confidence to players to make them feel a part of everything. Its good to let them share or think they share in making a decision. This adds to the attitude, and a good attitude makes good morale. I ask my seniors alot of the times what they would like to do in certain situations.

I think it is very important that when we start preparing our team we should have a plan for everything that we are going to do. When we have a meeting with the squad, which I do everyday, I don't ever go in unprepared. I have a plan for practice everyday. I want it to be well organized because we fight against time everyday. I also want to have a plan before practice so when I call the players together, we can make something happen.

I think the most important thing about coaching football, where a head coach is concerned, is that the term "I" means "we," "us," etc. I am not

an "I" coach. I've never seen a great "I" coach, meaning that "I" did this and "I" did that. If its good, then its us, the team, the staff, but if its bad, then its me. This is one important thing about coaching football. It is my job to see that we have a plan for practice; that we have a good practice, and that we don't have a bad practice. If we have a bad practice, I apologize for it, because I know we have good people, so it must be me that messed up somewhere in the planning.

To be a good coach, I think you have to be yourself. You have to be your own coach. We all have personalities and different ideas of our own and you will have your own plan. Your plan won't be like mine but you will have a plan, and you will be able to sell it to your team and staff.

In organization, you are fighting against time. You have to have a well organized practice to get things done the reason is players have more things on their mind now, more than before. You have to take them when you have them because time is involved. We demand alot at our practice now. We do things now that I never did a long time ago, but that was because we didn't know that they were important to the players and our program.

In a well organized team, the first thing you have to do is keep from losing. There are alot more games being lost than won. There is a great difference in my opinion, in winning the game and beating somebody, and there is a great difference in losing the game and being beaten. We lost alot of games when we were not really beaten and we won alot of game when we never really beat anybody. So we have to keep from losing first.

In talking about personnel, the weaker your team, the more conservative you have to be. For when you have a

weak team and you go out and try to do a lot of things, like throwing the ball a lot; you may be beaten badly. But, if you are weak and you go out and keep pushing along and plugging along you have a chance to beat somebody.

In order to keep from getting beat, the first thing we have to work on is the kicking game. The place to start is with one of the most important parts of the game - Kick-off return, kick-off coverage, the punting game, extra points and field goals. Thirty to thirty-five percent of every game deals with some aspect of the kicking game. If this much time is involved in an actual game, and we only spend a little bit of time a couple of days a week, then we're not doing everything we can to win. We go over our kicking game everyday. We work on all phases every day, (with exception of Friday).

From the kicking game we go to the defense. We stress defense, with our objective being to keep the other team from scoring. It doesn't matter what defense is used, the objective is to keep the other team from scoring.

We never want to give up an easy score. We feel that if we can continuously stop a team and make them drive the ball, then eventually they'll stop themselves with a penalty or blown assignment. If we can eliminate the long run or long pass then we're doing a part of our defense.

When you think about 30% of the game being kicking, and another large % being involved with defense, then you will find that 4 or 5 big plays on offense will usually decide the game. This is why we try to sell our people on going 100% on every play; trying to win on every kicking play, trying to win on every defensive play, we have a chance to keep from losing, unless we get penalties. This is the easiest way for a defense to

lose a game - to give up a cheap penalty. If we can keep from losing we gain confidence in all areas of our game, and most importantly, we gain confidence in each other. This is important in a team feeling that they, as a team, can stop the other team.

One area that is important as you try to keep from losing is the time just before a half. Its important to keep a team from scoring just before the half. Many games have been turned around just before the half. This time of the game is very important because teams gain confidence and momentum, and once the momentum turns to the other teams favor it is hard to keep things under control.

Offensively, the last thing we work on is offense; the first thing we want to do is give our players something they can do. This may involve changes in offensive schemes, but, again, we must go with what our players do best.

Now, once we establish our plan, the most important thing to stress to the offensive players is the fact that they must be able to get the ball out of the danger zone. To keep from losing, if we can keep the ball out beyond the fifty yard line, and our defense can hold them to 3 yards or less with no long runs or passes, the other team will have to put the ball in play 10 times before they will get into our territory, and they are not going to be able to do that very often.

The first thing we want to be able to do offensively is to bring that ball out from behind our 20 yard line. If we can do that, and if we have a good kicking game, we can put the other team back in the 3 down zone and we will be in good shape for our next offensive series.

The next thing we want to be able to do offensively is to make a big play

when we get the ball out in good field position area. If we can make the big down play we will have a chance for success. It is even more important that when we get the ball in the 4 down zone we are able to put something on the score board. If we can do this, then our chances of winning are that much better.

Now, I don't care how well we are able to move the ball from inside our own 20, or how well we move it in the 4 down zone; if we fumble the ball, throw interceptions, have penalties, or miss assignments, we are not going to win! I think that we can eliminate the penalties if we work hard enough, and we can eliminate most of the fumbles and interceptions. I try to stress, as far as fumbles are concerned, carrying the ball in the correct arm. Some people feel that if a fumble is going to happen, it will happen. But I still try to instill the correct fundamentals of carrying the ball so that we can avoid some of the fumble situations.

Once we have instilled the confidence in our offense, defense, and kicking game, the next important step is getting them ready to play on game day. I'm not positive on what it takes to get a team ready, but I keep this thought in mind every day. I call to their attention what could happen on game day. I call to their attention the difference between winning and losing. I call to their attention that everybody starts even when the season starts, that some people move up and others move down, no one stays the same. I try to give them something to take pride in - pride is very important in all areas, be it housing, eating, or physical condition. It doesn't matter how good you are if you are not ready to play.

Now we move into the game itself. You must have a plan for every movement of the game, even what you'll say after the game. You need to be able to change when unexpected things happen.

You must also be thinking about the next game when you have the game won, thinking about getting your good players out so they don't get hurt and giving the other players a chance to gain some experience so that they might be able to help you next week. This helps morale, and morale is very important to a team.

Another thing I believe in very strongly is preparing to win. After we win a game I sit down and find out what I could do better to help us win another game and what exactly I contributed to that particular game. This goes for practice also; I try to analyze what I did or could have to contribute to helping our team win on Saturday. I try to see what the players did well and what they didn't do well, so that we can become a better team. And regardless of whether you win or lose you want to learn something. When I was recruiting a whole lot I tried to sit down with high school coaches and learn all I could from them. Anything I can learn from other people is very important to me; in fact, most of what I know about football I have learned from other people.

Now that we are preparing to win I think it of vital importance to work on the little things, situations where we want to call time outs and where we don't want to call them; offensive situations before the half where we have to control the football. All these situations are important and we need to work on all these little things in order to be a good team. I want our quarterbacks to know what to do and when to do it. In clutch situations, I want them to be able to do what they do best. No matter whether they run, throw, or read the option, I want each quarterback prepared to do what he does best, in clutch situation.

I don't recommend that you do a lot of coaching at half time of a game.

If you're organized you have a plan for all occasions and situations during a game. I've lost games because I tried to change and out guess myself at halftime. Mistakes and adjustments should be pointed out and made, but no major changes need to be made. I also do not recommend trying to coach too much before a game. All you tend to do is confuse the players. You need to have your plan and go over any necessary things. Coaches should have their teams ready and on the verge of go. Questions could be answered but major changes do not need to be made.

During a game recognition is a big aspect. Players and coaches alike should be aware of what is happening and what adjustments need to be made. This aspect is one of the most important parts of the action during the progress of the ballgame.

As far as personnel is concerned, on offense, in the wishbone, we want the backs to always have their same alignment. We want the fullback to line up and hit the same crease each time he runs. This aids our backs, especially our quarterbacks in their execution of the option.

In the wing T the quarterback and the pitch man work down the line. If the defensive line penetrates the quarterback has to make the pitch hurried, this causing him to sometimes make a blind pitch. In the wishbone, if the fullback hits that crease just right everytime, the defensive tackle's penetrations will be stopped, thus allowing the quarterback to be able to see his pitch man and get the pitch to him and out in front of him.

If you run the ball well, the passing game will be open also. Some people say that if you run the wishbone well you can't pass. I disagree. First of all, you have to be able to run in any offense in order to be able to pass. Thus, if your running game is going well

this opens up the passing game. When they stop our running game the defense leaves themselves in a one on one situation between the wide receiver and the defensive back. If you can't complete a pass one on one, you're in trouble.