

## **I DO HAVE FAVORITES**

Someone might accuse me of having favorites on our team. You're right. I do have favorites. My favorites are those athletes who most fervently do what I ask of them. To those that do, I give more attention. I talk to them more. I spend more time teaching them. I also expect more of them.

The implication is made that my favorites improve more than others do because they are my favorites, that is somehow unfair. Don't mistake cause for effort.

Fact is that the athletes who come to me ready to learn, ready to listen, ready to act on what they learn, and try it my way even if it is more challenging and difficult than they imagine, are ready to get more out of our program. They are my favorites.

As a coach, I have only one thing to offer an athlete. What I can offer is my attention. This means I attend to their needs. The reward for good behavior should be attention - attending to their needs. The consequence of inattention, lack of effort, unwillingness or not ready to learn, or just plain offensive or disruptive behavior, is my inattention to that athlete.

As a coach, I want athletes that are eager to learn, eager to experiment, to improve, and eager to work hard. I want athletes who come to me for help in developing their mental and physical skills and are willing to accept what I have to offer. Otherwise, why do they come to me? I am going to reward that athlete with my attention. In doing so, I encourage others to become like the athlete above. If I spend my time with the unwilling, and/or disruptive player, I would only be encouraging undesirable behavior.

Over time, this makes it appear that my "favorites" are the better basketball players. This is not so at all. The better basketball players are those who pay attention. Thus, they become my favorites.

What the accusing person does not realize, is that you must have favorites if anyone is to develop in a positive fashion. The coach's job is to reward those who exhibit positive, developmental behaviors. Those are my "favorites", and they should be.