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Red Raider Ethics Generator

Coaching values can reflect core beliefs

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People in athletics are always preaching about ethics -- we just don't use those words. Ethics is at the core of what we teach and do every day. When coaches talk about their philosophies, only part of that means what they do on the court or field. Often, their philosophy refers to a set of values and core beliefs, and it is really about the personal and group ethics that successful teams require.

Like many people in the coaching world, my philosophy has been created over the years by some powerful, thoughtful influences. Those people whose voices echo for a lifetime.

Some are familiar names in college basketball, like coaches Jane Albright (Nevada), Candi Harvey (former Texas A&M head coach), John Wooden (UCLA) and Leon Barmore (Louisiana Tech), while others are coaches from different sports whom I've had the pleasure to work with, like football's Joe Tiller (Purdue). Still others, such as coaches Jane Albright and Candi Harvey, are from my formative years in basketball, but the most lasting values I have come from my parents and grandparents.

The core values they taught me have become the foundation for what I call the Lady Raiders' 10 Keys to Success. To have a successful team on any level, a few groups have to be committed to each other: the staff to the players, the staff to each other, and the team to the community. Each group has a responsibility in our 10 Keys: attitude, commitment, determination, enthusiasm, honesty, faith, loyalty, respect, responsibility and work ethic.

Each year we talk about these keys as the philosophy that leads our team.

We refer to attitude as altitude because we want to take the higher ground. We have to work hard while realizing that when we stumble, as we all eventually will, the most important thing is to learn, grow, and then move on. I've had players that I've had to discipline for a poor display of attitude or sportsmanship early in their career as a frosh or sophomore. It's so good to see them further on becoming our junior or senior leaders because they have grown.

We have to do what we are supposed to do, when we are supposed to do it, the way it is supposed to be done. This becomes our daily code of behavior in the classroom, on the court, and in the community. This is why we expect our players to attend class every day, be diligent in all assignments, and never give up on the court.

For us, enthusiasm starts with a contagious smile, and positivity makes any task easier and more meaningful. We must be truthful too, because we're accountable to each other and the institutions we represent. No one expects perfection, but everyone expects honesty. We teach our athletes to have personal faith, faith in each other, and the core values of loyalty, respect, and responsibility. Finally, we talk a great deal about the things we can control—like our team work ethic. While we can't control what other teams do, what officials do, how our fans react, or a host of other things, we *can* control how hard we work. The Lady Raiders simply refuse to be out-worked.

We sum up the 10 Keys to Success with a quote: "Keep your head and your heart headed in the right direction and you will never have to worry about your feet."

Our staff also lives by these ethics and an additional set of responsibilities. We agree, for example, that there is more than one right way to do things. As a head coach, I have to stay open to new ideas, yet never compromise what I believe in. Staff members have three bullet points listed at the end of their professional duties list. These points are to never forget that we are here for the players, to never intentionally break the rules, and to remember that our work ethic must match the team's.

Coach Barmore once taught me, "If you work for a man, in heaven's name, work for him, speak well of him, and stand by the institution he represents." That has stuck with me and is the core of the loyalty we all have to each other, to our great university, and to the game of basketball itself.

Finally, we know our community plays a part in our team's success, and as athletes we prefer to compete in front of fans who enjoy the game and believe in us. As our Raider Power campaign says, we want Texas Tech Athletics to represent our core values, and we want our fans to embody these values too: honor, respect, pride, and tradition. We represent the community of fans that wants us to succeed and we want to keep representing them because they make us proud.