

TEAM BUILDING IDEAS THAT FOSTER LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS

Brian Roper
Lynden High School





Central Question:

How might a coach build a team dynamic where the players are not only well connected on the court, but develop in-depth relationships that transcend basketball?



**“OUR ONLY CORE COVENANT FOR
OUR TEAM IS THAT SOMEDAY THE
PLAYERS ARE IN EACH OTHER’S
WEDDINGS.”**

**- AN ANONYMOUS HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL
COACH IN OREGON**



When it Comes to Team Building, Consider your “Why”.

- **What is my purpose in coaching?**
- **Think with the end in mind . . .**

The end of my days as a coach

The end of a player’s time in the program

The end of the season

The end of the day

Preliminary Thoughts on Teambuilding

“The goal is growth. Sometimes your team chemistry is initially only at a *three out of ten*, but you still want to try to take it to a *six*.” – Mike Mckee

“As a coach, you embed team building in as many activities as possible. Much of what you do has multiple purposes.” – Dave Dickson



Two Concurrent Beliefs about our Players

1. They each are self-centered by nature. (consider a typical two-year old).
2. They each possess a fundamental longing to be others-centered people of character.

Lynden Basketball Pillars

Humility

Humility is not thinking less of yourself but *thinking of yourself less*. It means being open to learn and seeking to grow. It is being a great listener. Humility means being modest in victory and gracious in defeat. "We are grateful daily to be on this team and to play this game."

Grit

Grit means we value the true meaning of "toughness." Grit means being mentally and physically strong. It means willing to work harder than the opponent individually and as a unit. Grit is passion and perseverance for long-term goals. A player with grit will battle to the end. A player with grit shows strength in his body language and plays with positive intensity.

Ownership

Taking ownership means players and coaches understand that "the will to prepare is more important than the will to win." Ownership means taking responsibility for your actions and accepting the consequences. "Discipline yourself so that someone doesn't have to." It means admitting mistakes (and they will come) and learning from them. Being an "everyday guy."

Unity

Unity starts with individual responsibility. When there is unity, players lose themselves in the common cause of the team and to one another. Forgiveness is a regular practice. Players ask the question, "What can I bring to this team today?". Teams that demonstrate unity are connected on the court and in their relationships. "Alone you go fast, together WE go far."

Significance

Significance means we understand that we were made to count and to make a difference beyond ourselves and beyond our team. We know that "little eyes are upon us." We compete with class. "We don't talk trash; we pick up trash." Significance means we use basketball as a vehicle to help others through example and deed. "Selfless Service" is our driving principle.



1. Cast a Vision for Shared Team Values



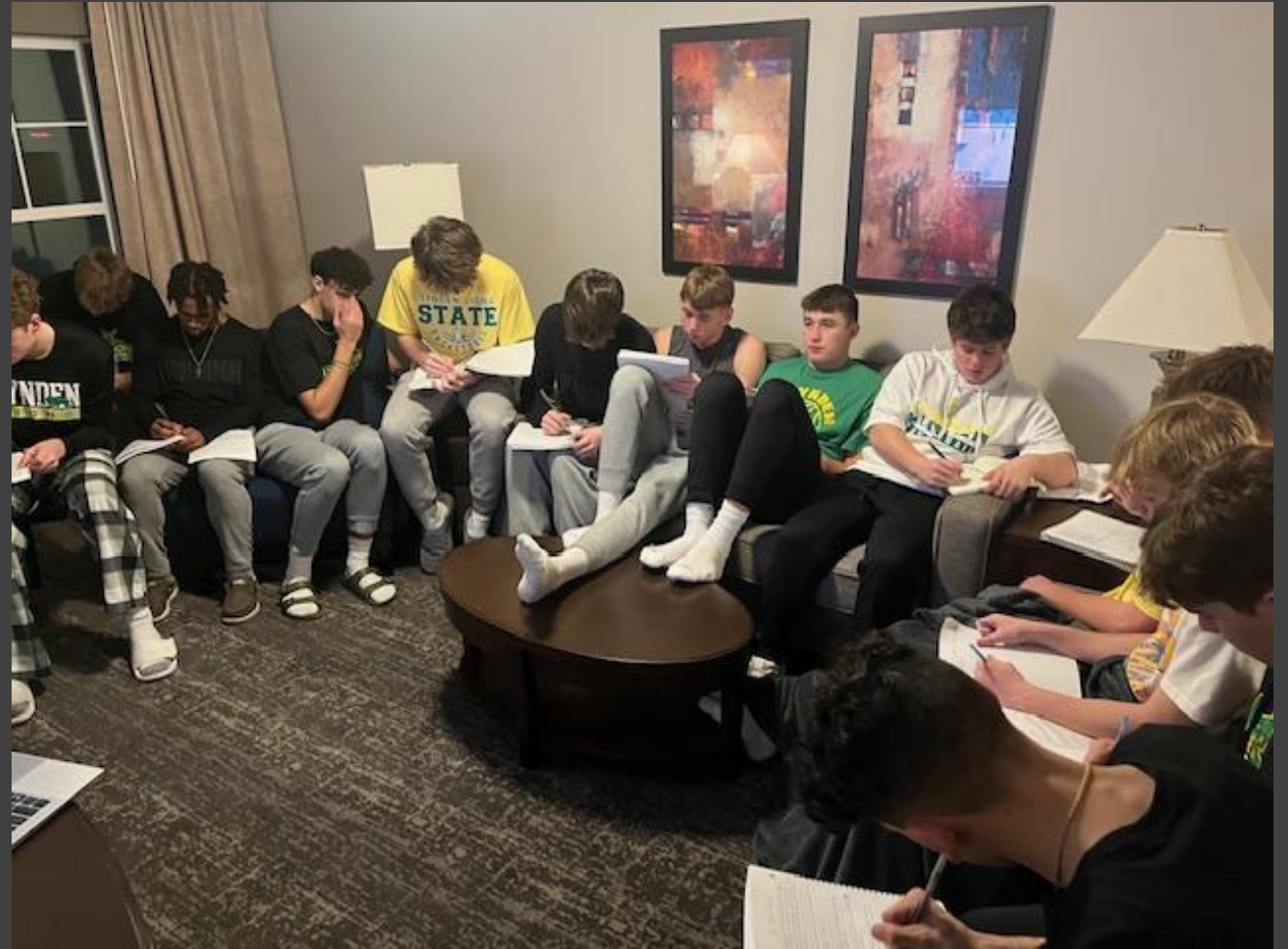


2. Create Mottos that Reflect Core Beliefs

- “Be About Others”
- “Compete with Class”
- “See a need, fill a need.”
- “Embrace the 32 Minute Grind”
- “Be where Your Feet Are”
- “Deserve Victory”
- “No Face” (“show strength in your body language”)
- “Team – Teammate – Self”

3. TEACH AND
EMPHASIZE EACH
DAY THE NOBLE
CALLING OF
BECOMING A
GREAT TEAMMATE.

(BUILD ON *YOUR*
PILLARS)





Team Quotes and Concepts (for team discussions or short lessons)

“We want to lead the league in High 5s, Smiles and Sweat.”

– B. Roper

“Just because you are on a team, does not mean that you are a team.” – Kent Victor

Mickey Mantle wanted on his tombstone:

“He was a great teammate.”

“The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.”

– G.K. Chesterton



Team Quotes/Concepts Continued . . .

“The beginning of love of a brother, is learning to listen to them.”

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“You can impress people from a distance, but you can impact them only up close.”

– Howard Hendricks

“Develop your gift and then give it away.”

– Don Meyer

Advice given to John Wooden by his father:

- “Don’t Whine”
- “Don’t Complain”
- “Don’t Make Excuses”



Team Quotes/Concepts Continued . . .

“Let’s win the bench battle.”
– Shane Wichers

“Effective teamwork begins and ends with communication.”
– Coach K

“The strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack.”
–Rudyard Kipling

“Alone we go fast; together we go far.”
– African proverb“

“On this team we are all united in a common goal: to keep my job.”
– Lou Holtz



4. Teach and Model Character Traits that Promote Friendship

- **Physical Touch** (Steve Nash – 239 “high fives” a game and Kelsey Plum at UW)
- The importance of **forgiveness** – asking for it, giving it, and receiving it.
- Emphasis on **individual responsibility**: (getting rest, good nutrition, being on time, avoiding trouble).
- Encourage **empathy**. (Walk a mile in a teammate’s Nike’s)
- Holding ourselves and one another to team standards. Be **accountable** to each other.
- The Shared joy of **servicing** together and servicing each other. (Coaches sweep the floor and Servant Warrior Chart)

Servant Warrior Assignments

Road Game Assignments

JV and C get the Gear to Games, Varsity gets it home.

Trunk (To (JV/C) & From (Var))	Balls (To/From)	Balls (To/From)	Water (To/From)	Extra Gear
12/4 Oak Harbor -- Zach/Luke & Ty/Jack	Brody/Brady	James/WB	Both Charlies	Spencer x2
12/8 Jackson -- Lincoln/Adam & Charlie/Kael	Gordy/Dani	Both Ty's	Matt/Brant	Dane/Anthony
12/12 Squalicum -- Ryan/Landon & Brady/Weston	Spencer x2	Malachi B	Malachi K	Weston
12/16 MtLkTerrace -- Eli/Kai & Dani/Spencer	Luke/Kael	Zach/Jack	Dawson/Brady	Sam/Ty H
12/19 NV -- Sam/Cayden & Anthony/Brant	Landon/Dani	Ryan/Charlie	Adam/WB	Lincoln/Jack
12/22 Sedro -- Dawson/Isaac & Brady/Weston	Cayden/Kael	Sam/Spencer	Kai/Brant	Eli/WB
12/28 Yakima vs Zillah -- Charlie/Kael	Brady	Varsity Only	Brant	Weston
12/29 Yakima vs Mark Morris -- Jack/Ty H	Anthony	Varsity Only	Spencer	Dani
1/9 Mt. Baker -- Weston C/Malachi B & Brant/Anthony	Adam/Jack	Lincoln/Dani	Luke/Ty	Zach/Brady
1/15 King's Showare -- Spencer/Dani	Brant	Varsity Only	Brady	Charlie
1/17 Burlington -- Malachi K/Dane & Charlie/Kael	Kai/Brady	Eli/Weston	Landon/Dani	Ryan/Spencer
1/27 Sehome -- Ty J/Matt & Ty H/Jack	Dawson/Kael	Isaac/Charlie	Cayden/Dani	Sam/WB
2/3 LC -- Coach VanDalen will Haul it Over	Coach VD	Coach Hepp	Coach VD	Coach VD

**** Take Responsibility Seriously To and From Games****



5. Demonstrate Good Team Chemistry as a Staff

- “More is caught than taught.”
- Remember players are always watching us (especially when things go bad).
- Publicly support one another.
- Check your ego at the door.
- Keep your inner circle tight.



6. BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT BUILDING COACH-PLAYER RELATIONSHIPS.

“AS A COACH YOU SHOULD NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPACT OF TIME SPENT ONE ON ONE WITH A PLAYER.”

- TOM ROYS, ARLINGTON AD

Questions to ask yourself (Don't Assume)

- Do I regularly schedule time to meet with each player?
- Do I know their stories?
- Am I curious enough?
- Whom did I miss today?
- Am I strategic in building trust?
- Bruce Brown to a Coach about Intentionality:
 - a. “Do you love your players?”
 - b. “Do they know that?”





7. And be Intentional about Fostering “Horizontal” Relationships (player and player)

- “Put Ups”
- The “Circle of Encouragement”
- Player Driven PowerPoints
- “Awesome Cards”
- Small group discussions (“turn to your teammate”)
- Player Small Group Assignments (present to your teammates)
- Team Traditions: Some year-to-year and some happen organically



“PUT UPS”
AND THE
“CIRCLE OF
ENCOURAGE-
MENT”.

Player-Created PowerPoint (About their Teammates)



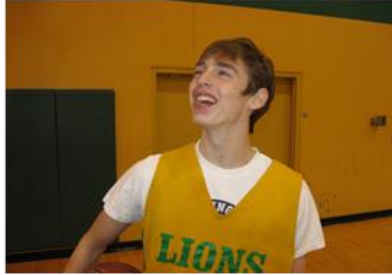
Brady's History

- Brady Started playing basketball in Kindergarten and he has fell in love with the game ever since.
- Lynden Basketball was a big part of his life as he was a water boy for the Lions growing up.

Fun Fact: Brady once played the trumpet back in the 6th Grade!



Trenton McKee



You are awesome because...

- You always have a smile on. You've got an awesome personality, and you're always a crowd favorite.
- You slap the rim on every lay-up in warm ups.
- Your steady attitude towards everything is great, and your willingness to be laughed at and laughed with improves the team chemistry so much!
- No matter how frustrated, excited, or bored you get, rubbing your bangs will always make you feel better?
- You always compete and work hard on your game. It has been fun watching you improve.
- Every day, there is something new with you. In a game, you're always making magic on the court.
- You're a true ladies man. Everywhere I go, I always see you with either Lisa or your mom.
- You always have a smile on your face, you're able to be serious and still have a good time, and you make a difference.
- "Lisa" "Oh Baby." You're the master of PGP and you know how to elevate game... on and off the court.

“You are Awesome!”
Cards



More Horizontal Team Building

- Partner discussions, Podcast Pals.
- Player Small Group Assignments (such as a mini-lecture on an article)
- Memorable Experiences/Leave space for spontaneity
- No Phone Zones
- Lots of Lynden Team Traditions
 - a. The coach-player chest bump
 - b. Post-game roar
 - d. “Team Hello” Line (Andy Sears)
 - g. Team Walks (every road trip)
 - h. Meals together (Coach Pop)



MOUNTLAKE TERRACE ANNUAL BOWLING “PRACTICE”

8. Teach the “Art of Encouragement” (from Jon Gordon podcast with Jordon Montgomery)

- We are constantly trying to elevate each other.
- Encourage means “putting courage into” one another
- Praise the “who” over the “do”.
- Articulate the difference between encouragement and flattery.
- The role of self-encouragement (“Don’t listen to yourself; talk to yourself.”)

9. Build a Culture of Toughness

“If you want to make it special to be on your team, make it hard to be on your team.” – John Bacon, author)

- On-court points of emphasis: defensive effort, rebounding, sharing the ball, physical play
- The “Tip Drill” (shared hardships)
- Navy Seal “Hell Week” example
- Lion “Hustle Point” System



Lynden Lion Hustle Points



#	Players	Dive	"Wow" Rebound	Charge x2	Over Back	Extra Hustle	Deflection (1/2 pt)	Deflection with TO	Total Hustle Pts	HPR (HP Ratio based on HP per Min)	Minutes	Games Played
2	Brady	6	13	16		43	9.5	33	120.5	3.98	25	28
3	Weston	3	16		2	28	9.5	15	73.5	4.56	9	28
4	Charlie	10	26	2	6	37	11.5	14	106.5	4.51	20	28
5	Kael	5	7	4		16	2.5	8	42.5	4.25	6	26
10	Dani	2	7	2	2	22	5.5	18	58.5	4.41	12	28
11	Ty	6	35	4	2	22	10.5	21	100.5	4.36	14	28
20	Spencer		3			2	0.5	1	6.5	2.16	3	19
21	Anthony	11	36	14	6	33	23	48	171	5.65	25	28
22	Brant	5	34		5	32	16.5	19	111.5	3.88	24	28
24	Jack	3	31	4		28	11.5	23	100.5	4.26	19	24
15	Gordy					1		1	2	1	2	4
23	TyJ		2			1			3	1	2	3
	Totals	51	210	46		265	101	201	873.5			

* Hustle point of the year -- Ty's Double Hustle point that led to a Steal and Layin, and Kael's 30/70 Ball

“BE GREAT AT THE
THINGS THAT
TAKE NO
TALENT.”

– BRAD STEVENS





10. Define and Value Every Person's Role on the Team.

- “In our program everyone’s role is different, but their status is the same.” – Jay Wright
- Regarding a team member’s role
 - a. Articulate it – be specific, direct and include social roles. (What’s your #1 thing?)
 - b. Sell it – especially the less glorious roles.
 - c. Publicly and privately praise those who are “a star in their role” (“Where would this team be without _____?”)
 - d. Provide room for expansion of their role

11. Read the Room and Be Prepared to Deal with Potential Cracks in the Foundation

- Be alert to cliques, “van wreckers,” pouters, hurting players.
- “Resistance to team building is a green light to be curious.” T.J. Rosene
- As a coach, have the courage to confront
- Bruce Brown’s steps for working with a wayward player:
 - Call the behavior what it is. (“Here, we live in the truth”)
 - Help the player self-evaluate. (“What happened and what were you thinking?”)
 - Ask, “Who do you want to be?”
 - Walk alongside the player.
 - Give credit for their growth (“Look who you are becoming.”)



**“THERE NEEDS TO BE A CONSTANT
RENEWAL OF VALUES THAT LEAD TO
CAMARADERIE.” - MIKE KRZYZEWSKI**

(The best landscaped yard in the neighborhood doesn't
stay that way without constant attention)



12. “Stay Connected after they Graduate.”

- “Our commitment to you extends beyond high school.” - Kent Victor
- Alumni are always welcome and often invited to practices, games.
- Nalin Sood’s plan for weekly Sunday alumni calls and texts.
- My hope is that our former players sense this about their coaches: *“They were and are about me the person more than me the player.”*

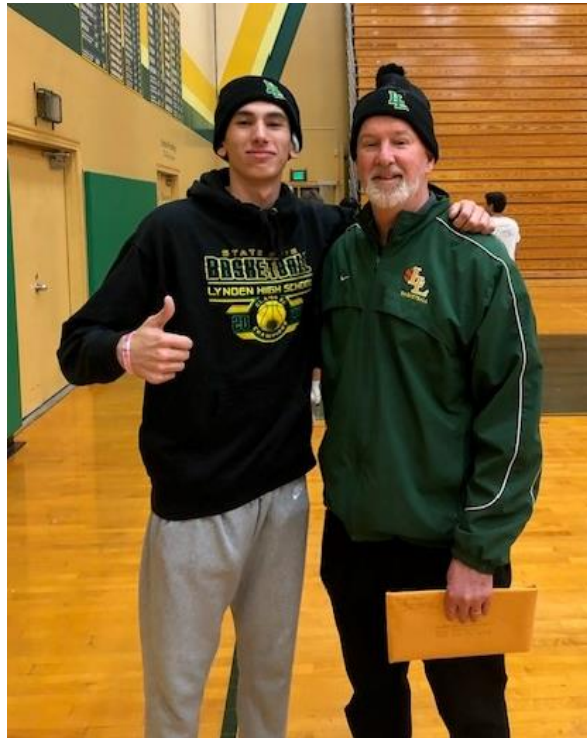


“There Was This
Coach....”
(Remember your Why)

“When you ask successful
adults what it was that
brought them there, they
often begin with these four
words . . . ‘*There was this
coach . . .*’”

- Bruce Brown





Helpful Resources

- *The Hardwood Hustle* Podcast
- *The Coaching Culture* Podcast
- *Jon Gordon* Podcast

Attitude by Jay Wright

Teaching Character Through Sport by B Brown

Leading with the Heart by Mike Krzyzewski

Extreme Ownership by Jocko Willink

Captain's Leadership Manual by Jeff Janssen

The Culture Code by Daniel Coyle

Five Dysfunctions of a Team by P Lencioni

Winning with People by John Maxwell



BRIAN ROPER
(360) 927-5621
ROPERB@LYNDEN.WEDNET.EDU