



WORDS OF WISDOM FROM COACH PETE CARILL - GREAT INSIGHT!

-- Whatever you emphasize and to the degree that you do, you get better at it. Its results that count, and they should determine your principles. It is a mistake we all make as coaches to think there is only one way of doing something. There is not. Whatever works, works.

-- There's a tendency for players to believe that because the coach is talking to someone else, they don't have to listen. If they're all listening, the coach won't have to repeat the same thing to the guys who weren't involved.

-- I always spent a good half-hour every day on basics. And one thing I noticed: Sometimes in an effort to shorten our practices, we cut out the basics. If we did that for a long period of time, the guys began to slip. The basics remain the key to success on every level of the game, and you can teach them.

-- There is a difference between teaching and coaching. When you are instructing your team about the actual game, you are teaching them, transmitting knowledge and information to them. The best situation of all is to be able to attract the best talent and be a teacher; that is what distinguishes coaches like Mike Krzyzewski, Bobby Knight, Rick Pitino, Dean Smith -- although it is unfair to single them out because there are another 150 like them whose schools are not as prominent so they can't attract the talent.

-- As a player, you want to be good at those things that happen a lot -- that cannot be overstated. What happens a lot? You dribble, you pass, and you shoot -- you want to be good at those skills. If what you are doing -- what you are good at -- doesn't happen that often, then there's no real benefit to being good at it. A wise player understands that.

-- [Les Yellin](#) [the former coach at St. Francis College in Brooklyn] summarized the main virtues [of players we value] as "IQ," "EQ," and "RQ." IQ means what it always means -- the function of intelligence. Behaving intelligently covers the whole realm of knowing what to do. EQ is energy quotient, which means having the energy to work at what you're doing. When your EQ is good, you practice harder, play the game harder, and when it looks as though you cannot move anymore, you find a way to move some more. RQ stands for responsibility quotient. You know what to do, you have the energy or EQ, and now you have to know that whatever it is, it must be done.

-- I tell my guys that if they work hard every day, then they don't have to worry about game plans, or where they play, or whom they play, or about rankings and so on. The quality of their work habits can overcome anything: praise, criticism, good or bad coaching. They have their daily behavior to fall back on.

-- I can check the level of your honesty and commitment by the quality of your effort on the court. You cannot separate sports from your life, no matter how hard you try. Your personality shows up on the court: greed, indifference, whatever, it all shows up. You cannot hide it.

-- Kids are not learning the basic skills of the game because it takes too much time to teach them, because coaches and players alike want immediate results, and because the number of coaches who can and will teach you kids is declining. It is hard to teach things that take time to learn. The players themselves, when they're young, are impatient, and they don't want to take the time to develop other skills if they see right away they what pleases their coach, what produces immediate results like winning and success, is performing one particular function. So they don't learn the skills, and it becomes hard for them to adjust and improve.

-- If a guy cannot pass, the ball stops moving. If he cannot shoot, he will always be open. If he cannot dribble, he cuts his value to the team by one

third. Furthermore, if he cannot dribble, the defense will attack him. If you want to become a better dribbler, dribble. Dribble on a court, with a man guarding you. You would think that at the highest level of player -- the NBA -- everybody could dribble. But they can't. It's one of those skills we are not paying enough attention to.

-- No drill is any good unless it's used in some form in the game. There is no transfer of learning. I emphasize to my guys that anything we do in practice is not a drill. If they get to thinking it's a drill, they won't notice it's the same thing that goes on in the game. I have to tell them that what we're doing in practice is exactly what happens in a game. Everything we do in practice must show itself somewhere in the game, or else we don't do it.

-- Passing was the single greatest attribute of my teams over the years. A passer who can see people open is the same guy who sees where and when to screen, avoid picks, helps on defense -- in other words, he can see. The passer is the same guy who knows where weaknesses are, where the drives are, and where everybody on the floor is. To score, you gotta move the ball. We pass to move the defense, and every pass counts. What I also love about passing is how much it helps to build team morale. Passing takes the tension out of a game. Passing makes everybody feel a part of the game, a part of the team. No single aspect of basketball does more to develop good team play than passing. The first thing I look for in a high school player is, Can he pass? If he can, he's the same guys who can cut, and can defend.

-- If you want to learn how to shoot a specific shot in basketball, get the mechanics straight, then go out and practice hard. Once you have the right basics, you can teach yourself how to shoot.

-- Here's the thing about teaching basketball: It's just like teaching a subject in school. You stand in front of the class saying the same thing to everyone, and yet you have these differences in their ability to learn and utilize the information. The same is true in basketball. There is a limitation to what you can teach.

-- When a player is told what he has to do to become a better player, does he get mad at the coach, or at himself? If he gets made at the coach, he'll never get better as a player. If he gets mad at himself, he will get better.

-- There's a difference between the guys who play to win and those who play not to lose. A big difference. When you play to win, you do all of the extra things that maybe aren't visible, but the results is that you come out on top. Playing to win [means] subordinating [your] needs to those of the team. Remember, some guys walk out of a losing game having scored 25 points and are perfectly content. If you have guys like that on your team, you're not going to win too many games. You cannot ever forget the human equation in sports.

-- The essence of character is what I call mental and physical courage. Everybody has the potential for courage, but some people -- because they have had to demonstrate it all their lives -- are good at it, whereas others are not until the need suddenly arises and they have to learn to react. Basketball brings out the need for courage.

-- Everybody makes such a big deal today about team play because there's such a scarcity of it. Greed is a reason. You have to understand the influence of greed. A player has to be selfish in the pursuit of the development of his skills, but he cannot be selfish when it comes time to blend them in with what's good for his team.

-- Defense is the heart of our game. Good defense is recognizable even when you're losing. The object of my defensive strategy is to contest every pass and shot, to force the opponent to move the ball under continuous pressure. I want the other team to play offense longer than they're used to. Defense is not a variable. It's a constant. Defense has to be deeply embedded in your attitude. It's something you can do well every time -- both the individual and the team. Skill is a variable. Work is not a variable. It's an attitude. Defense is head, heart, and legs.

-- Nothing is more intimidating than deflecting passes. It makes a passer very tentative. I say that if you don't use your hands, you're committing a bigger sin and aren't as effective defensively. My view on this is also controversial.

-- The truth is, you can take whatever defensive philosophy you want and reverse it and a forceful coach will make it work. It's mostly attitude and effort that make a defense successful. But one thing -- putting pressure on the ball -- has more of an impact than any philosophical discussion of how to guard a man. If each player, when he guards his man, can press him,

put pressure on him, you'll disturb passes and intimidate your opponents.

-- Good players are always moving their legs.

-- The sterner the discipline, the greater the devotion.

-- When you're fundamentally unsound, you inhibit the way your team can play. Poor fundamentals restrict the things a coach can teach.

-- Players who do not compete hard against each other because they're afraid it will affect their friendship have trouble getting better.

-- I don't like to see a guy get patted on the back for doing simple things, for doing the things he should do. You have to be able to tell a player or coach when he does a bad job that it is a bad job. You show respect by praising them when they do the things that deserve praise. They must learn the difference between what is done right and what is done wrong, and if you try to make them similar with easy praise, you'll never succeed in teaching them the difference.

-- When you demand a lot, my experience has been that you get more. If you insist on less, you get that, too. Self-esteem comes from accomplishment, not the other way around. The more you demand, the more they give, the stronger the sense of satisfaction.

-- Speed follows luck and covers a multitude of sins. Wherever fast players go, they always get there faster than slower players.

-- Every little thing you do on offense counts. That means every pass, every cut, every screen, every dribble is part of the end result and therefore requires care and concern. We try to make it simple and we work hard to make things easy.

-- Cut with credibility. What I like my guys to do on offense to start a game is pass and cut through the defense. The minute you do, you start to move the defense, a main goal. It also helps to identify the defense, whether it's a zone, a combo, or a man-to-man. It is essential that when a cutter cuts through, he look for the ball. There will be no credibility to the cut unless the player executes it with authenticity, i.e., believes he might receive the ball.

-- Size is not the most important thing about rebounding. Knowing how to use your body, seeing where the ball is going, that's what counts. It is not the guy who jumps the highest. The guy who jumps the highest is all alone. Jumping in a crowd is another story. Just watch guys like Larry Bird. A good rebounder plays for position, but is always attentive to the ball. You cannot lose sight of the ball. You've got to have some idea where the ball is going and how to prevent your man from getting it.

-- Solving a press. When you get pressed, there are three important things you need: First, you need someone who is good at taking the ball out -- someone who can see which man is open and isn't going to get into trouble if he gets the ball. If the guy throwing the ball in panics, or is blind, he's going to throw the ball hurriedly, and because of where he throws it, he's going to get the player catching it in trouble. Second, you need a player who can advance the ball to the other end of the court. Third, you have to have a scorer at the end of the press, someone who knows what to do when he gets the ball.

-- Make a zone run: First, you must recognize the zone: Is it a 2-1-2, 2-3, 1-2-2, 1-3-1, or some combination? Then you must remember that your decision how to attack the zone has to be based on the shot you can make. To say it another way: The shot you can make dictates your offense against the zone. The quality of your passing will determine the quality of your shot. Move the ball and move yourself so that you make the zone "run."

-- Pivoting is one of the most underrated techniques and skills, and when you go to teach it, someone always asks, "Why bother?" We have to teach the player to disregard the feeling that it's not essential, that it's not necessary in today's game. One reason some player's disregard its importance is that they do it so easily. Generally, guys with large feet seem to have more trouble pivoting smoothly.

-- Fakes are like lies. The first thing I tell anyone about faking is that if you're going to fake, your move has to look like the real thing. When you go to tell a lie, it has to be close enough to the truth to be believable. Same thing. So often, guys fake so strenuously that they telegraph the fake: Their fake looks like a fake. Young kids have to be actors and develop cunning. They shouldn't work only on one fake; you always want to have more than one weapon. Also, if you're wide open, don't fake -- shoot!

-- Conditioning: I tell my players if you play hard every time you play, you'll be in good enough shape. Once practice starts, we work hard and that's the best conditioning there is. Everything counts. Run hard, play hard, go after the ball hard, guard hard. Everything we do is game-condition because how you play in practice is how you'll play in a game.

-- How do you know if your team has camaraderie? I can tell by the way they walk off the floor at the end of practice. You can feel their happiness vibrating; you can see how they work out together; you can watch it in the shower room -- what they're talking about, the level of excitement. There are many ways you can feel it, and it's better to feel it than to hear it. The camaraderie practically comes out of their bodies. And you don't feel that way when you're losing. Losing reveals things.

-- A bad win is one where you score more points but they've outplayed, outsmarted, and outworked you. It could be a lucky win, or an undeserved win. Regardless, the point is that whatever you call it, a bad win is still better than a good loss.

-- A good high school coach is the salt of the earth. And when his teams are well coached, a college coach is the direct beneficiary of all his work. When players who have had good high school coaching walk on the floor in college, there isn't much that a coach has to do. I cannot emphasize enough what it means to start with that great coach at the sixth or seventh grade who tries to get kids to do things better. Grade school coaches are the unsung heroes of this country and they're disappearing because it takes a lot of work and constant attention. Sometimes it is too much of a sacrifice.

-- I don't recruit players who are nasty to their parents. That shows they are giving less than they can give and can't forge the bonds essential for a good team. I look for players who understand that the world does not revolve around them.

-- Use your assets: You have to take advantage of what you have. Marilyn Monroe and Sophia Loren did that, and we do it, too. If you have a fast team and you don't run, you're being stupid. And if you have a slow team, you must take the run out of the game.

-- There are so many things that don't show up on the stat sheet, or in the win and loss column, that no one can explain, but you see them and they affect the outcome of games. There are hundreds of them: Players who learn how to do something just by watching compared to those who watch the same demonstration and can't do it; who go after loose balls and come up with every one of them as opposed to someone who tries just as hard and comes up with none. How is it that one guy can deflect a pass over and over again and another cannot? Many times I ask myself the question, "Am I trying to teach this player instinct, or am I teaching him a skill?" Whether you're trying to teach a college player or a seven-year-old, you are looking for instinct.

-- The most important thing that you can do is DO what you are doing well. The most important thing you can do on or off the court is to focus on what you are doing when you are doing it. When you play, PLAY. When you study, STUDY.

-- When I look at coaches like Tom Landry, Chuck Noll, and Don Shula, guys who were so great and maybe in later years did not remain so great, I wonder if they didn't get a little tired. I don't compare myself to them in terms of coaching, I just mean in terms of longevity. If you do something well enough you're eventually confronted with the challenge of sustaining your standard of performance over a long period of time. In the last couple of years, I've seen a little slipping at the edges, and I've found myself thinking, "Whoa, you're not doing what you're supposed to. You let your assistants do too much coaching, you let little things slide." You start thinking this might not be important. And you get tired: Inside yourself, you get the feeling you want to do something that you cannot do any longer.