

# AAU Washington Girls Basketball

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## COACHES

They are called a coach, and it's a unique job. There is no clear way to succeed. One cannot copy another who happens to be a winner. There seems to be some subtle secret chemistry of personality that enables a person to lead successfully. No one really knows what it is. They are soft, tough, gentle, good-natured, foul tempered, proud, and profane.

Coaches are out in the open being judged publicly by those who are not qualified to judge them. They cannot satisfy everyone, seldom can they even satisfy very many. Rarely do they even satisfy themselves. They endure criticism. They all too often neglect their families, their work and themselves. Coaches are in the spot light with nowhere to hide. In victory everyone tells them what a great job the players did today. In defeat everyone tells them all the things they did wrong, and what they need to change. There may be the worst profession in the world. It's unreasonably demanding, bad pay or no pay, and full of relenting pressures from the sidelines. I ask myself, why do coaches put up with it? Why do they do it? I sympathize with them and appreciate the enormity of the responsibility placed in their hands. One is moved to admire them and hope that sometimes those behind them will understand this strange breed they call coach.

I have often asked myself, why do I do it? Although my reason has varied through the years, coaching has never been clearer than an individual example that I was blessed with. I would like to share it with you.

At the 7<sup>th</sup> grade level, I had a six-foot tall young lady, named Sarah. She came to me through other coaches. These coaches were not interested in giving their time to her because she literally couldn't do anything on the court. No one had taken the time to work with her. However, this girl had the heart of a champion and wanted to play the game. In two years, Sarah goes from sitting on the bench, to starting every game. She has become a dominating factor in every game. Sarah now has other coaches trying to recruit her. I know she will go on to play high school and college ball.

I know someday when I am watching Sarah play college ball, on a full scholarship, it will bring tears to my eyes. Sarah was down and had very little self-esteem. She now runs into my gym telling me about all the points she made on her school team. Sarah's head is held high, and she is full of pride, self-esteem, and self-worth.

**Please coaches let us never forget that Sarah is why we do this.**

**Thank you Sarah, you will always have a special place in my heart.**

**The Coach**

Note: I wrote this in 1992. Sarah recently mailed me a copy of Players Blue Chip Magazine where she was featured on the front cover. She is in her senior year at an Oregon high school and has had several letters of intent to play college ball.