



# Habits Coach

## Leadership Conversation with Bobby Bayliss

### CHARACTER

"I've always paid close attention to how prospective student-athletes treat their coaches, teaching professionals, and parents in particular. Respect is a big factor. For example, we took a trip to New England to visit a player who was one of the top players in the country. In the middle of our dinner conversation, the young man told his father to "shutup, he's here to talk to me, not to you." If he's willing to talk to his parents like that, he wouldn't hesitate to throw me under the bus. The second key is honesty. Are they telling me the same thing they are saying to other coaches? Coaches get opinions from their peers and colleagues all the time, so when the consensus doesn't quite add up, it's a red flag. We expect our student-athletes to live up to their part of the bargain as we do ours."

### CLEAN SLATES

"In 2001, we had a team that was pre-season ranked below 30 in the country finish Top 16 nationally at the end of the season. The year prior we had a team that underachieved due to lack of maturity. Then our number 1 player graduated and went on to play professionally. So we had a team of guys who were essentially forced to develop as leaders in short order. Thankfully, they did. In addition, 2001 brought an assistant coaching change in Billy Pate; past transgressions weren't divisive issues because the athletes felt like they had an opportunity to start fresh with a clean slate and a new voice."

### SUCCESS

"I've never been comfortable finishing the season outside the Top 25 nationally. It bothers the heck out of me. Obviously the goal is to win the whole thing, and we've come close (1992 NCAA Finalists.) I work hard and have never been afraid of putting in the hours to help our athletes develop. Also, I'm a stickler on sportsmanship and doing the right thing. We have two basic rules: 1) Don't do anything that will embarrass the program, and 2) Don't do anything that inhibits your ability to compete. Generally speaking, we stay clear of a lot of rules and channel our focus on the fundamentals."

### ADVERSITY

"Adversity is the whole deal. It's about finding out who you are when the lights go out. My strategy involves admitting how much I hate setbacks and then reminding myself that this is why I entered the coaching profession. With the team, you communicate that everyone falls down – it's whether you get back up. It's a theme I've used in my personal life, to the best of my ability. It's probably true that the stronger a person's faith, the better one can manage life's highs and lows. But it doesn't necessarily have to be that way. I've never prayed for a win, but I've asked for the ability to give my best effort."

### NETWORKING

"Networking and being connected to others in the industry has never been a goal of mine, although I value the interaction. I've never set out to be that type of person. Rather, I've always been one to ask a lot of questions. I understand that I don't have all the answers. Through the learning process, I've been fortunate to develop some great relationships. If you set "being connected" as a goal, you're likely to get full of yourself. It's important to put yourself in the other person's shoes; and it's vital to know who to go for the best advice (e.g., biomechanics, team chemistry, etc.) Most of us are happy to share what we've learned. Most of us who get into coaching are teachers first and foremost. We're here to impact lives. We can't wait to teach, can't wait to learn, and we're getting paid for this! At the end of the day, it's about helping other people."