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INCREASE YOUR VIDEO IQ - Video the Storm Way

Wow! It has been 20 years since I was a Graduate Assistant at the University of Tennessee and we reached the Final Four. We were heavy underdogs having lost nine regular season games before entering the NCAA Tournament. In our quest for a National Championship we were matched-up against one of the highest-octane offenses in history, the Long Beach 49ers. It was so bad that in the coaches' chaltalk before the game my sister, Tara, gave us no chance! We won the semi-final game and went on to defeat traditional power Louisiana Tech to win the National Championship. While I still remember the feeling of winning, I also can't forget the work that went into preparing the scout tape. For those of you who remember the pain of hooking together VCR's and logging on yellow legal pads offenses and defenses using "the counter"...mark your spot, rewind, eject, play, pause, and record. How tedious and don't you dare forget to reset the all-important "counter"! What a time consuming process!

Fast-forward 20 years, the evolution of the game, and the advances in technology are amazing! I have been through many different systems from tapes to digital and what took hours (even days) now takes minutes with my Sportstec editing system! While there are many factors that go into winning, you cannot overlook the benefits of video in today's game. Through my experiences as a college coach, video coordinator, WNBA Assistant, Head Coach and scouting coordinator for USA Basketball I have had the opportunity to edit a lot of video using various systems. We all watch and manipulate a tremendous amount of video. Like most coaches, we want every advantage possible and video is one way to gain an edge!

There are various ways we present video to our team. We prepare pre-game edits to complement our walk through. The player section focuses on our opponents' top 8 or 9 players and their favorite moves. These 6 or 8 clips of each player highlight individual strengths. This section of the edit provides our players a good feel for individual players' game. We also show our team the opponents' "favorite" five. These are edited clips of their transition, quick hits, continuity offense, as well as out of bounds plays and special situations. It typically shows them running the same play three times against different opponents. We work off a menu so our players know what to expect and are well prepared!

Our video coordinator does a great job and captures and codes our games live. The coding tool in the Sportstec system makes it very simple. She is able to do offense, defense, player minues, and other important situations to our team either as a general theme or specifically fo that game. The may include but are not limited to instances such as transition defense, picks on the ball, turnovers, and my favorite, highlights! Our software organizes like-events into a Matrix to use to teach our staff and team.

It is also great to watch video individually with players. We don't have to waste time (or their attention span!) rewinding or fast-forwarding. We can load and watch only their playing time very efficiently using the Movie Organizer. This is a great teaching tool because every coach knows the famous saying, "video doesn't lie!"

We use our system to produce a video playbook. This enables our players to not only learn the plays on the court but to learn the plays visually. They can see the whole play develop including spacing and timing. Players can also see their individual skills including proper square up, setting and using screens, footwork, and ball skills. It is amazing how much more players pay attention to video when they are watching themselves.

We always look for creative ways to use video to help expand our players' games. We identify players either in the WNBA or NBA who are highly skilled and breakdown their games to show our players. These can be position specific. For example, we pull clips from Sue Bird, Dawn STley, or Jason Kidd four our point guards, Katie Smith, Sheryl Swoops, or Ray Allen for our wings, and Lauren Jackson, Lisa Leslie or Elton Brand for our post players to watch. We look for the subtle nuances of their play that our players may implement into their games.

Working with video is not only productive but it is fun! I believe our players improve by watching themselves as well as others (they can even use iPods to watch video now!). It helps our overall team play, whether it is in self-scout situations or opponents' scout tapes. The more you make video a part of your players' daily basketball diet the greater opportunity you have to be successful!

Now I just open up my laptop and work with my Sportstec software. I'm just glad I don't have to hook two VCR's together anymore.