

More Than A Game

I hope this article finds you well. At publication, most high school teams in the state of Michigan will have concluded their seasons - with just a few teams still vying for a state championship. Thank you to all the [BCAM](#) coaches who responded to last month's [article](#) focusing on joy and purpose in coaching.

This past month I have been able to watch a lot of basketball and visit many coaches and athletic directors. Without a doubt, my favorite part of visiting programs is seeing the positive impact that coaches are making, not only on their teams but in their communities, too. One moving game was watching [Madison High School](#) play [Marine City](#). Madison's athletic director [Jimmy Brown](#) - was spearheading a fundraiser for a Madison middle school student who has cancer. There were T-shirts sold, a 50/50 raffle, as well as half-court shots for donations and prizes. In speaking to the young man's stepfather - one could just tell how impactful and meaningful the evening was for the young student and his family.

At Rochester [Stoney Creek](#), BCAM veteran [Steve Norgrove](#), who recently earned his 200th victory, is an example of a basketball coach who uses athletics as a vehicle to teach his players larger lessons. His program has seen adversity first hand, having a player who is battling brain cancer. The [team and community](#) have come together, in what can only be described as - inspiring. Moreover, the basketball team recently helped [raise money](#) for the awareness of mental health issues. Stoney Creek basketball is facing tough issues square on - such as cancer, depression, and [suicide](#), to name a few.

At the college level, coach [Greg Kampe](#), the head men's basketball coach at [Oakland University](#) and BCAM member leads an annual [Coaches Beat Cancer](#) fundraiser, which involves big-name basketball coaches and media members coming to Metro Detroit for two days of raising money, socializing, golfing and, most importantly, cheering up young cancer patients at [Beaumont Hospital](#). Coach Kampe was inducted into the [Michigan Sports Hall of Fame](#) in 2017 and won his 600th career game in 2018.

It is not only important for coaches to lead, but also teach their players how to lead as well. One story I shared in a [hoopscoach.org](#) article was of a guest appearance to [Michigan Elite 25](#) by former NBA coach [Stan Van Gundy](#). He was engaging, funny, thoughtful, and challenged the camp, both players and coaches, to use their talents (their platform) to be more than great players- to be leaders. He went on to speak about important issues such as inclusion, justice, civic duty, and what responsible citizenship looks like. Specifically, he challenged the camp to take care of their schools, to not let **ANY** student in their school sit alone during lunch. That as talented athletes – they have the leverage to make a difference – possibly more than anyone else.

Currently, there are plenty of examples of NBA coaches speaking out on various social concerns. Coaches like Steve Kerr, Gregg Popovich, and Doc Rivers – all use their position to positively impact the world around them. Why shouldn't high school coaches?

The title of my sequel is [Elite Journey II: The First Task of Leadership](#). This title was inspired by Robert Kennedy's quote: **"The task of leadership, the first task of concerned people, is not to condemn,**

castigate, or deplore; it is to search out the reason for disillusion and alienation, the rationale for protest and dissent – perhaps indeed to learn from it.”

Certainly, we cannot cover every issue in the news - and discuss it - though if we (coaches) remain silent on the most important issues - then our players will not be prepared to lead in their schools and community. With February, celebrating [African American History Month](#), and March, celebrating [Women’s History Month](#) - we as educators have plenty of examples and context to teach valuable lessons during the season.

To prepare for ***Elite Journey II*** - I interviewed a diverse group of coaches, educational leaders, and athletes from professional, college, and high school levels. Not only does this story contain issues such as being a good teammate, mental toughness, coaching, recruiting, and stretching beyond one’s comfort zone; it also dives into social issues that I believe coaches care about deeply – inclusion, social justice, empathy, patriotism – to list a few.

I am hoping you might take advantage of a BCAM special - just \$10 – plus tax and shipping. You can also purchase my first ***Elite Journey*** book for \$10 as well. Discounts for both books will run through Memorial Day Weekend. For team discounts, please reach out to me personally. You can [purchase](#) either copy now through my [website](#), by simply typing the discounted price while ordering. If it is easier to email or call me - please do.

Like my [first book](#), this can be more than a casual read for coaches or athletes – with questions at the end of each chapter, it is ideal for a team read, book club, a leadership class, or any sports related classes. In fact, the books are even being used in some football classes. Check out what people are saying about my new book [here](#)!

Best of luck to those teams still playing and to all programs preparing for their season-ending banquet! Hopefully, it is a celebration of great senior leaders, the growth of your team, and of all the good your program was able to do this season.

All the best-

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