

Ah, the summer vacation months, a time for relaxation, sun and fun. Or at least in theory we hope it would be. The reality is that summer is as busy as any. From recruiting, clinics and camps along with preparation for the upcoming year we can get a lot done while the campus is quiet.

From a player standpoint, this is the best time to get quality reps working on your individual game and body strength. I put a saying on our camp t-shirts this June stating "Basketball is played in the winter but basketball players are made in the summer!" I think this is absolutely true. This is the time when they can spend quality time in the gym getting shot repetitions and putting something new in their arsenal. I once read the Magic Johnson tried to add a new move every summer so by the time training camp came around it he could use it naturally in game situations and we have talked several times about this as a team. From the reports I've gotten from our players, they have taken this to heart.

One thing that we have come up with is the 16,000 Club. From the end of the '04-05 school year to the beginning of the next there are 15 weeks. To get 16,000 shots in over that time they would need to shoot roughly 1,060+ shots in a week. That seems like a lot, but a shooter with a rebounder can get 300+ completed in under an hour easy. So if a player takes the time to shoot just one hour a day 16,000 is easily attainable. We started this last year and Andrew Platt (one of last year's seniors) and current senior to be Brad Hochstein both shot well over that. To give an extrinsic reward to those who complete this goal we will have a plaque placed in the locker room where we will list the 16,000 Club members from each summer, as well as list them in our media guide. This should give them some added incentive to get their shots in.

Yes the shots are important, but obviously making them is even more important. The goal in these shooting sessions is to not only get the reps in, but to make 80% of those you take. I was talking with Tim Buckley, the head coach at Ball State University, and he mentioned the 180 Degree Shooter. If you can add your field goal %, your 3 point % and your free throw % to amount to 180, then you are a great shooter. Former Pacer Reggie Miller was a great shooter. Once practice begins, that will be one of the things we will look at.

Because our returning team is spread out across the state, it's hard to get them all together at the same time, but we have several groups playing together this summer as well. The western Nebraska boys are playing in a 4 on 4 league in Alliance, there are several playing in Lincoln together and recently a group finished fourth in the top division of the State Games. They've done a good job of getting together and organizing themselves.

On a different note, one of the most enjoyable things about summer is working with young people in a camp setting. It's great teaching the next generation of basketball players the fundamentals of the game. I think it is also a great experience for our current players. You can learn quite a bit by teaching – it reinforces the skills they need to work on during their own workout sessions.

One of the biggest things I see our players realize is how much they are looked up to by the campers. It is a reinforcement of the idea that athletes are role models. As a college basketball player, young players are watching you. They see you as someone they might want to be. So it is a player's responsibility to act in manner that deserves this attention. When camp is over, our guys were bombarded with autograph requests. That told me our players took their role of being a positive influence seriously. Right or wrong, athletes are in a spotlight no matter what the level and the guys who worked camp did a great job.

The 2005-2006 school year will be here before you know it – I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer!

Go Tigers!

Coach Ian Brown