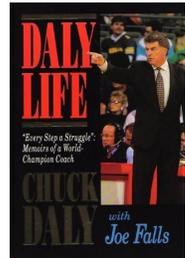


Daly Life

Chuck Daly (1990)



Notes by Bob Evely
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I have always been intrigued by Chuck Daly as a coach. Perhaps I was attracted to him because he coached the Detroit Pistons (the area I grew up) to two consecutive national championships – starting with them when they were quite dismal and coaching them to the top. It was said of Coach Daly that he could take a team of individuals with big egos, and get them to work together as a team, enabling them to succeed and to become world champions.

Following are some thoughts on coaching from this book.

Execution

I could know every way to throw a bounce pass, every man-to-man defense, and everything about attacking a zone, but if my players couldn't execute it the team wasn't going to win. (45)

Paying the price

My theory about coaching and other professions is that those who are less determined or less motivated will weed themselves out. Some may have all the desire in the world, and technically they may be as good as or better than the next person, but if they don't want to pay the price, they're not going to make it. (46)

Getting to know the players

[Upon arriving in Detroit] I made a commitment to get to know the players, both on and off the floor. I began socializing with them. I wanted to know what was in their heads, whom I could depend on and whom I couldn't. (86)

I try to understand their mentality, and I try to understand them on and off the floor. They are, for all practical purposes, private corporations. (183)

Coaching the best player

If you don't get along with your best player, you don't survive. You have to give up some self-esteem, and maybe some ego, to pacify him, but it must be done or your chances for success are zero. (134)

Coaching him [Isiah Thomas] can be difficult just because he is so much different than the others. (135)

Learning from mistakes

[After winning a playoff game by 35 points] ... The minute it was over, I sat back and said, "What did we do wrong?" That's coaching for you. I always look for the negatives. (209)

Teamwork

[After winning their second consecutive championship] ... I wanted to tell the fans about the sacrifices these players had made to win. They gave up personal glory, points, assists, rebounds, minutes played. All the things most players live for. Our guys gave up these things so we could develop other players and become a team. We won because our players were secure enough within themselves and unselfish enough to give up their personal stats and glory. (281)

I've also collected a few articles written about Chuck Daly and wanted to share a few short snippets from those writings.

From “Daly was the right man to lead The Bad Boys to greatness” by Vito Chirco (8-24-17)

Daly’s players knew the game plan every time they went to battle for him, and because they so highly respected him, they executed it to the best of their ability on a nightly basis.

Daly got the most out of Laimbeer and his Detroit teammates because he let them be themselves on the basketball court. He allowed Laimbeer to be the “baddest” of all The Bad Boys because he knew it benefited the team.

In a nutshell, that was the beauty of Daly. He allowed his players to feel comfortable being their true selves on the floor because he knew it was the best way to get the most out of his teams. He knew it was the most effective way to unleash the scoring prowess of Bad Boys floor general Isiah Thomas and the rebounding and defensive prowess of Dennis Rodman.

The difference between him and other coaches is that he was an expert in massaging the egos of his players and in coercing his players to work hard for him on both ends of the floor. It made him a champion head coach and the best one to ever road the sidelines in Pistons franchise history.

From “Remembering Chuck Daly” by Jack McCallum (5-8-2009)

I thought about the time before a playoff game at the Palace in Auburn Hills, the air thick with tension, when Chuck leaned down to the press table and said to Dave Dupree of USA Today and myself, “See this gold stripe in my tie? It’s the exact match of the pinstripe in my suit.” It was his way of releasing tension, and saying that, yes, this seems like life and death but it really isn’t.

I choose to define Chuck this way – by the respect he earned from the smorgasbord of personalities over whom he held sway. With the possible exception of Phil Jackson – and I say possible – I can’t think of any other coach who would’ve held together that rowdy band of Pistons (Isiah Thomas, Bill Laimbeer, Vinnie Johnson, Rick Mahorn, John Salley, Dennis Rodman, and Joe Dumars, the latter being the lone voice of sanity) better than Chuck. I can’t think of any other coach who could’ve herded together that vast collection of Dream Team egos (Jordan, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird, Charles Barkley) and never got, as far as I heard, one word of criticism.

His genius was in giving players a lot of rope but always letting them know that someone was holding it at the other end. Chuck sweated only the big stuff, never the small stuff.

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