



HURRICANE ATHLETES: TRYOUT INTANGIBLES

Building the Heart & Character of a Champion

Hurricane Athletes,

We are approaching the time of year where tryouts are looming. Being an integral part of the Hurricanes program, I would like to offer you a few thoughts on your upcoming tryouts and the winter season. For some of you attending schools with limited participation, tryouts will just be a process of placement on a team. For others of you, cuts are involved as there are more kids trying out than there are spots on the team. If your athlete has been a Hurricane for some time, they have probably heard me say that it's the intangibles that will set you apart and that you have to be a difference maker on the court as a way to set yourself apart. Every kid loves to shoot, so it's very rare that an athlete will stand apart from others by shooting, unless they are shooting the ball at a very high percentage. Aspects of the game that not many others do are what set athletes apart from others. Here are some things we've been stressing to your athletes that as coaches we love to see, and that we feel could give them an edge for tryouts.

1. **COMMUNICATE:** It shows leadership. It shows the coaches that you understand what is going on. Most importantly, it shows the coaches that you are able to work within a team environment and you understand the importance of telling your teammate when they are getting screened, or you have their help behind them. Communication is important on offense and defense. Not many athletes talk to their teammates during play. **Be the one who communicates and you will stand out!**
2. **LISTEN:** Be coachable. Coaches like coaching athletes who listen to their instructions and try their best to execute the way the coaches are asking for. If a coach is giving you advice on how to improve your game, implement it. Listening doesn't just apply to your coaches, but to your teammates as well. When one of your teammates is calling out a play, asking for help on their defender, or calling the team together for a huddle during a free-throw to give reminders or make adjustments, you must be willing to listen and implement changes. Listening is also a form of communication!
3. **EXUDE CONFIDENCE:** When you do something well, don't celebrate it, but definitely reward yourself and your teammate that was involved in the play by pointing your pointer finger at him/her. If they gave you a great pass that lead to a strong finish, turn to him/her and point at him/her to show you acknowledge the good pass to your success in finishing the play. Not only does this show the coach that you acknowledge that your teammate helped contribute to your success but you are boosting team morale and encouraging team play.
4. **POSITIVE MISTAKE RESPONSE / AMNESIA:** You are human. You are going to make an error. When you do, have a positive mistake response. Do not get down on yourself by slowing down or shaking your head. That hurts the team



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as they are all trying to hustle back to make up for your error while you sulk in your mistake. Have a positive mistake response. Be the first person to sprint back down the floor to slow down the ball and communicate to your teammates instructions (ex: "I got ball, you get basket"). There is nothing you can do about your mistake other than making up for it on defense or the next play. Having a positive reaction not only shows the coach that you know you made an error but that you're willing to work hard to make up for it!

5. **PLAY DEFENSE:** Not many people like to play it but defense stops teams from scoring and is vital to a Championship environment. Coaches love kids who will keep a defender in front of them and take pride in their defense. Make defense a priority. Play good man defense and provide good help side defense to your teammates. Constantly be talking on defense, allowing your teammates to hear that you are behind them in help position or that you are closing out to put pressure on the ball.

6. **TOUGHNESS INTANGIBLES:**

- Hustle
- Dive on the floor for loose balls
- Block out and rebound
- Take charges

These intangibles are what I call the "toughness" intangibles. Not many kids do them and they are guaranteed to set you apart:

- Hustling back to play defense or fill the lane on offense.
- Diving on the floor for loose balls.
- Blocking out your opponent, and then pursuing the ball for a rebound.
- Anticipating and setting your feet to take a charge.

These intangibles are the least performed because it requires toughness! Make a priority to be good at these toughness intangibles and you will set yourself apart.

7. **ATTITUDE:** Having a good attitude is going to reflect in your play. Do not talk to refs, argue calls, or show anger towards your teammates. Be the first to encourage them, or take the responsibility of the mistake or play on yourself rather than pointing the finger, even if the mistake was not yours. If you foul someone hard, be the first to pick them up.



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8. **SPORTSMANSHIP:** Basketball is a team sport. You must show that you are willing to play within a team environment. If you're hogging the ball, not making the extra pass, or overshooting, you are communicating to the coach that you do not know how to play in a team setting. Coaches may choose a less skilled player that works well with the team over you, so if you exhibit poor sportsmanship, you may not make the cut. Be a team player!
9. **BE REALLY GOOD AT A SKILL SET:** These are 5 skill sets that every team needs and can earn you more playing time.
 - **A good shooter:** If you can score, you are likely to get playing time. Although you don't want to be a "Net Zero" player. We define a Net Zero Player as one who contributes in a positive aspect (scoring) and then gives up errors on the other end (let their opponent score), thereby canceling out the effectiveness of your score. Be a "Net Positive" impact player.
 - **A great defensive player:** If you can stop someone from scoring, you're going to be an asset to your team, and the coach will want you to guard their best player.
 - **A good ball-handler:** If you know how to handle the ball in pressure situations, can break a press and start the offense, you will likely get playing time as either the primary ball handler or the back-up!
 - **A great passer:** If you know how to set your teammate up with a good pass that leads to a score, you will be a valuable asset to the team. On an inbound play, a great passer is like a quarterback in football, you must be able to see the gaps, time and place the pass perfectly to your teammate. If a coach has a great passer, they tend to give them playing time, because all coaches know the pass (assist) is vitally important to the success the scorer will have.
 - **A great rebounder:** Someone who can clear the boards will get playing time. No team will succeed if you give your opponent 2 or 3 shots per possession. Blocking out and rebounding is vital to a team's success, and if you can do it well, you are bound to get playing time!
10. **SHAKE YOUR COACHES HAND:** What better way to show your coach respect than to shake their hand and thank them for their efforts. Not only does this make your coach feel appreciated, it shows that you respect and care about your coach. It also allows the coach to thank you and express to you their gratitude for your efforts that day. Leave a good impression with your coach, go shake their hand after tryouts, practices, and games.