

# What Great Coaches Do *Differently*

**11 ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE COACHING**



**Rob Haworth & Todd Whitaker**

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## **Eleven Elements of Effective Coaching**

**Rob Haworth  
Todd Whitaker**



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## What they're saying about What Great Coaches Do *Differently*

"This book isn't just about sports. This book is about life".

—Frank Hamblen, *Assistant Coach, Los Angeles Lakers*

"Many think that coaching is only about X's and O's. While that is important, there is so much more to being a great coach. This book can serve as a guide for all coaches, both new and experienced."

—Coach Tom Beach, *Two Time Indiana High School State Basketball Champion*

"**What Great Coaches Do Differently** reveals the true joy of coaching, teaching, and changing the lives of young people in positive ways. All coaches at every level should do themselves and their players a favor and read this book."

—Tim Flannery, *Assistant Director, National Federation of State High School Associations and Director, NFHS Coach Education Program*

"**What Great Coaches Do Differently** creatively relates the values of interscholastic athletic programs and ties those values to education. The book defines the role of the coach and how the coach best serves his or her athletes by teaching the values of participation in sport."

—Robert B. Gardner, *President, National Federation of State High School Associations*

"This is a great book for any coach who wants to positively impact athletes and leave a legacy that spans generations. It is a tool that will not only help you be a better coach, but also a better person."

—Donna Noonan, *FCA Vice President and former Golf Coach, University of South Carolina*

"This book cleverly demonstrates for coaches at all levels how to be successful both on and off the field of athletic competition."

—Jim Carr, *President and CEO, National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics*

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**Rob Haworth and Todd Whitaker**

# About the Authors

**Dr. Rob Haworth** is a vice president for the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and Director of the Champions of Character program. The Champions of Character program provides character education to coaches, athletes, and parents at all levels of sport participation. The goal of the program is to improve the culture of sport. Rob, who is recognized as an up-and-coming leader in the field of character-driven athletics, has made several presentations at the local, state, and national levels. He is married to Amy. They are the parents of Olivia and Eric.

Prior to joining the NAIA in July 2008, Rob spent 20 years in public education. During that time, he served as a school district superintendent, assistant superintendent, athletic director and teacher. Rob's duties also included many years as a high school baseball and basketball coach. He is a graduate of Greenville College, Illinois, where he competed in cross-country and track and field. He holds a master's degree in education from Indiana University and a doctorate in philosophy in educational leadership from Indiana State University.

**Dr. Todd Whitaker** has been fortunate to be able to blend his passion with his career. Recognized as a leading presenter in the field of education, his message about the importance of teaching has resonated with hundreds of thousands of educators around the world. Todd is a professor of educational leadership at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana, and he has spent his life pursuing his love of education by researching and studying effective teachers and principals.

Before moving into higher education, he was a math teacher and basketball coach in Missouri, and he still holds a school record for most wins in a season at one of the high schools where

he coached. Todd then served as a principal at the middle school, junior high, and high school levels. He was also a middle school coordinator in charge of staffing, curriculum, and technology for the opening of new middle schools.

One of the nation's leading authorities on staff motivation, teacher leadership, and principal effectiveness, Todd has written 22 educational books including the national best seller, *What Great Teachers Do Differently*. Other titles include *Dealing With Difficult Teachers*, *Teaching Matters*, *Great Quotes for Great Educators*, *What Great Principals Do Differently*, *Motivating & Inspiring Teachers*, and *Dealing With Difficult Parents*.

Todd is married to Beth, also a former teacher and principal, who is a professor of elementary education at Indiana State University. They are the parents of three children, Katherine, Madeline, and Harrison.

# Introduction

In any given sports league or athletic conference, coaches have access to the same clinics and the same instructional DVD's. They have approximately the same amount of practice time as well as year in and year out access to about the same levels of athletic talent. Why is it then that some coaches succeed season after season while other coaches suffer through one losing season after another?

This book is about what great coaches do that sets them apart. Clarifying what the best coaches do, then practicing it ourselves, can lead to our own success as coaches. To clarify what great coaches do means we have to differentiate their actions from ineffective coaches. If the last five state championships, coaches conducted scouting sessions of their opponents, we might conclude that scouting leads to a state championship. However, we know this not to be true, because there are many coaches who scout their opponents but never wear a championship ring. This book is not meant to be a 12-step program to better coaching. Rather, this book frames the landscape of successful athletic teams from the perspective of great coaches. On what do they focus their attention? How do they spend their time and energy? What guides their decisions? How can we gain the same advantages?

This book flows from three different perspectives. First, Dr. Todd Whitaker's research studies on effective leadership. Dr. Whitaker has participated in a number of research studies that have examined the concept of "great and differently." Second, our joint work with several schools, districts, and athletic programs. Through years of observing, visiting and interviewing principals, athletic administrators, coaches, and athletes, we have gained insight into the attitudes and behaviors that lead to success. The third perspective is very personal: We write from

our own experiences as coaches, teachers, and school administrators. We have worked with many outstanding coaches. What made them great? What kept others from reaching that level?

Dr. Whitaker's work on "great and differently" began with an examination of school principals and other educators. His work was compiled in the book **What Great Principals Do Differently** (2002). Before long, it became evident that great principals and great teachers share many of the same qualities. It makes sense: Part of being a great principal is to be a great teacher; part of being a great teacher is to be a great leader. Dr. Haworth, as a former doctoral student of Dr. Whitaker's, examined the effects athletic participation has on moral and social character. In examining the relationship between character and athletic participation, it became evident that the coaches were the difference makers in character development. What was found was that sports do not build character—coaches do.

Which has led us to this work, **What Great Coaches Do Differently**. These chapters are not dedicated to offensive and defensive tactics nor are they dedicated to athletic skill and fundamental development. These chapters focus on the beliefs and behaviors, attitudes and interactions that form the athletic triangle of athlete, coach, and parent. Learning can happen in isolation; coaching happens between people. Effective coaching calls for "people skills," and the best coaches practice those skills every day.

The format of this book is straightforward. An introductory chapter provides context on the importance of learning from the most effective coaches. A concluding chapter asks us to consider our own core beliefs. And in between are the essential elements of what effective coaches do differently. You will also find Coach Fox—a coach who would love to have success but who follows the way of many ineffective coaches.