Danny Miles (1945-)

The second winningest coach in the history of men's college basketball, Daniel Joseph “Danny” Miles is head coach of the men’s basketball team at the Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT) in Klamath Falls. During the 2010-2011 season, Miles attained 936 career victories in forty seasons at OIT and his team accumulated fifty-seven consecutive wins at home, the longest active home-win streak in college men's basketball. In the last fifteen seasons, Miles led the Hustlin’ Owls to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Division II National Tournament thirteen times, winning the National Championship in 2004 and 2008. He was named NAIA National Basketball Coach of the Year in 2004 and 2008.

Miles received the NAIA Coach of Character Award in 2008 and was honored as A.T. Slats Gill All-Sports Coach of the Year in 2004. Other honors include Conference All-Sport Coach of the Year (four times), Conference Coach of the Year (ten times), Northwest Coach of the Year (twice), West Coast Coach of the Year (once), and the 2005 Distinguished Alumnus Award by Southern Oregon University (SOU). Miles has been inducted into four Halls of Fame: NAIA, Oregon Sports, SOU, and the city of Medford. After winning his 500th basketball game, the OIT gymnasium was renamed Danny Miles Court.

Born on October 9, 1945, in Medford, Miles was recognized as the outstanding athlete at Medford High School in 1963. Miles Field in Medford was named for his father after his successful career in semi-pro baseball in that city. Miles was awarded a baseball scholarship to Oregon State University, but he transferred because of an off-season injury and attended SOU from1964 to 1968. At SOU, Miles made honors teams in three sports, set collegiate football’s All-Time passing record (All Divisions) in 1964, and led the nation in total offense in football in 1965.

After college graduation in 1968, Miles began coaching football, basketball and baseball at Mazama high school in Klamath Falls. In 1969, he became head baseball coach at Bend high school. The next year, Miles returned to Klamath Falls as assistant coach in football, basketball and baseball at OIT, and in 1971 became OIT’s head coach for basketball and baseball, and offensive coordinator for football. Although he had not purposed to coach basketball, the program, under Miles’ direction, quickly became successful enough to compete at the national level and he eventually decided to concentrate on basketball.

Miles credits his assistant coaches and supportive fans for much of his success, but his unique system of coaching and evaluating players, called the Value Point System (VPS), is another key factor. The system computes the full value of players by including assists, recoveries, missed shots and rebounds, personal fouls, and turnovers, demonstrating the value of supporting players and helping compare players and teams.

OIT teams are known for their hustle and stamina. Miles schedules player substitutions to keep the team’s energy level high to wear out opponents, thus giving younger players the chance to learn in difficult situations. Although he recruits players from around the world, Miles is proud that both of OIT’s National Championship teams included four Klamath County boys in the top eight players. His teams are widely recognized for their scholarship, sportsmanship, and character.

In 1997, legendary coaches Pete Newell, John Wooden, Dale Brown and Danny Miles were invited as guests to the grand opening of the U.S. Basketball Academy at MacKenzie River. There, Wooden and Newell demonstrated their character as role models for Miles. Like them, Miles believes basketball teaches many lessons that are essential throughout life: how to handle failure and come back stronger for it; the importance of earning respect from your teammates, coaches, and opponents; and accepting personal responsibility for success and failure. His lifetime goal is to pass on these ideals to his athletes.

To establish good attitudes and promote character growth, Miles emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community. The team sponsors Special Olympics events and has played basketball against the special team for twenty-three straight years, losing by one point each time. The coaches and players provide annual support for at least two African children to attend school. They visit retirement homes and reserve special seating for the elderly at each home game. Team members participate in children's reading programs, speak to community youth, and manage an all-faith chapel at OIT. In 2010, Miles traveled with the Athletes in Action Christian Sports Ministry to instruct the national basketball teams and coaches of Rwanda and Kenya.

Danny Miles has spent most of his life in southern Oregon, but his leadership, character, and success have gained international renown. He and his wife Judie live in Klamath Falls and have five children.

Written by Barbara Ditman

Further Reading:

Miles, Danny. "The Value Point System." Breakthrough Basketball, n.d. http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/pr/value-point-system.html.

"Oregon Tech Men's Basketball Head Coach Danny Miles." Oregon Institute of Technology, 2010. http://www.oit.edu/athletics/mens-basketball/coaching-staff/danny-miles.

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