



## **THREE OF A KIND**

### **Course 03: Coach Zeljko Obradovic**

#### **Lesson 01: Building a team**

**Language: English**

### **BUILDING A TEAM**

#### **RECRUITING FREE AGENTS / WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN PLAYERS**

When we start creating a new team, we try to find what positions are necessary to cover. As you can understand we never start from zero; after many years working in the same team we have two important concepts that we have covered before we start recruiting for the new season:

- A) We have an important base of players who are the foundation of our team. These players are the key element to show everybody – new players, agents, general managers, opponents – how we want to play and who we want to help reload our team.
- B) The second aspect that we have covered is our basketball philosophy. Everybody – at the professional level – in Europe knows how Panathinaikos play, the values we have with the aim to be the best team in Europe.

The next step will be to gather as much information for every single player that we are interested in. It is very important for us to talk with other coaches that have coached a player in the past. It is always a big help for

us to listen to different ideas, before finally taking the decision. Of course before recruiting a player we will talk directly with him to listen to his ideas. We have our view of the specific player or players through the games we have watched or may have played against his team(s).

The main ideas in this process are:

- A) To watch videos during the season of players that we believe can be interesting for our style of play.
- B) To talk with other coaches that have coached the specific player or players in the past. If is possible, to talk with coaches that have similar ideas that we have and also with coaches that prefer to play using different concepts.
- C) To talk with other people who have information about this player(s): general managers, former teammates, agents, etc.
- D) To talk directly with the player.

What we look for in the player is:

- A) The player must have a great personality (character) in order to avoid problems during the lengthy season. As you know our roster is very deep with the idea to cover all our necessities during a very long season (Euroleague, Greek League & Cup, etc.). We need to have enough information to confirm that all our players are "first level team players" and also with great technical, tactical and physical skills.
- B) Also very important to be a hard worker. Without hard work you cannot achieve high goals. Normally we have young players in our team and it is important to confirm that they are capable to work on team aspects as well as progress individually.
- C) To cover a lot of the fundamentals we need for the specific position. For example if we talk about the guard position: the player must know how to run Pick & Roll, who to pass to in the half court, who to defend full court etc.
- D) For our team and for our mentality they must have "hunger" for titles.

### **SIGNING PLAYERS BASED ON THE TEAM GOALS AND THE STYLE OF PLAY THE COACH WISHES TO IMPLEMENT**

- A) We have our philosophy, but we always try to make adjustments based on the characteristics of newcomers.
- B) Of course they will also adjust to our system.

The system that we use with the aim of achieving these two objectives is to talk with them individually. During the season, but specially during the first months of their arrival, we talk a lot individually with every player in order for him to realize what expectations we have.

If we don't do this specific and individual work with each newcomer we can have some misunderstandings that must create problems during a very long

and hard season. Our objectives are team objectives and for this reason the individual goals of each player, inside the mechanics of the team, must be really clear.

### **OVERALL PHILOSOPHY**

For us in the club it is also very important to have an economic balance (regarding the contracts). We try to avoid over paying one player compared to the others. This is a really important matter inside our team, or other teams at the very high professional level. If we do not take into account the real value of each player in the market, and we sign a player over paying for him, we can create a bad atmosphere inside the team and in the locker room. Sometimes it is impossible to be absolutely fair with everybody but it is important to be as fair as possible with all the members of the team.

### **TEAM STRUCTURE ON AND OFF THE COURT**

Discipline is the KEY word for our players. We represent a big club with great tradition and millions of fans all over the world. For this reason all our players must take into account that this responsibility on and off the court.

The coaching staff is open, during all the season to talk with the players about all the aspects in their lives but always taking in account that discipline and respect are key elements of our relationship and also in the relationship between players.

### **TEAM RULES / CODE OF ETHICS**

In the team we have our rules / code of ethics. We must respect ourselves in order to respect others. During the preseason we talk very carefully with all the players – in more detail with the newcomers – about our rules and our code of ethics. We immediately start to put these into practice.

We have rules regarding sleeping time / rest. Nobody can disrespect this. Also we must respect the meeting time for practice. Of course sometimes we have an exception. We live in a big city, with big traffic jams and if a player or coach comes late to practice he must invite everyone for dinner.

It is really important at this level, but in my opinion across all levels that you must set some fixed rules.

### **COACHING STAFF DUTIES**

During the recruiting process - that starts during the season not when the season is finished - the coaching staff must gather all information about the player(s) we are interested in.

They watch film of the players, they will talk with other coaches that may have worked with them as we said before. Also the coaching staff must know their contractual situation: if they finish, if they are under contract but have a buyout clause etc.

At the end of this work they will write their report with all the characteristics of the players and with a short synopsis about our opinion. If the report is positive, finally we will talk with the player we are interested in, in order to have direct contact.