

Unlock your full coaching potential-organize, inspire, and lead with purpose from day one to championship day. This guide will keep you organized and help you effectively communicate with players, parents and coaching staff.

Command the Whistle: Leadership, Organization, and Respect in High School Coaching

By Steven Lapham

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COMMAND THE WHISTLE

**Leadership, Organization, and
Respect in High School Coaching**



Steven Lapham

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Chapter 1: Getting the Job

Outline

Finding a Job

Getting Hired

Letter of Interest, Resume, Cover Letter

Interviewing

Follow-up

While I was coaching Rugby in the spring, I heard that the Head Volleyball coach had been removed from his job and the high school was looking for a new one. I was playing some solid Thursday night volleyball at the YMCA so I figured I was good to go ;) I asked my AD if I could apply and I did but it was only two weeks before tryouts so he asked me if I could run tryouts as he knew I could coach. I ran four days of tryouts and made selections, I told the girls who was selected for what team and that I hoped I would be their coach come Monday. My AD had no one else apply and said I had the job. Little did I know this would change my life, improve my coaching ability immensely and go on to coach volleyball for 29 years.

You Must Find One to Get One

The first step in your coaching journey is finding a job. Without a coaching position, there's no coaching career. To get hired, you'll need to take an active approach and utilize various resources to find the right opportunity. Finding the right coaching job requires research, persistence, and a willingness to put yourself out there.

Start by casting a wide net with general job searches.

A simple Google search for "coaching jobs" will bring up a variety of websites, including popular job boards like *Indeed.com* and *ZipRecruiter*.

If you're focused on a specific area, try sites like *TopSchoolJobs.org*, which lists coaching vacancies across the country.

Another great resource for finding local positions is *CTREAP.net* for Connecticut-based openings.

You can also visit the websites of specific conferences or athletic leagues you're interested in. Many of these sites post job listings for schools within their respective conferences, giving you a more targeted search.

If there's a particular school you're interested in, check out their athletic department's website. You'll often find listings for coaching vacancies as well as contact information for the Athletic Director (AD). This is important because the AD will be your primary point of contact throughout the hiring process. Getting in touch directly can set you apart from other applicants.

Don't forget to consider the logistics of the job. Check the school's location and consider your commute. It might seem like a minor detail, but believe me, if you're spending more time in traffic than you are on the field, it will quickly become a problem. Keep alert on your commutes; I have hit two deer (in the same place, I kid you not) and one coyote. Find a position that suits your lifestyle, and make sure the commute isn't a burden.

When you find a position that interests you, don't wait too long to apply. Many coaching jobs have a brief application window. Sometimes the position is first offered to internal candidates, and only after that is it opened to the public. Applying early can give you an edge. Check the teacher and coaching contracts for salaries and necessary paperwork.

Getting Hired

Once you've found the right position, it's time to apply. A strong application package is crucial, and it should include several key components.

Start with a letter of interest addressed to the Athletic Director. This is where you'll introduce yourself, express your enthusiasm for the position, and highlight your relevant coaching experience. Be sure to include any certifications you have, such as CPR, AED, First Aid, and any specialized coaching certifications like those from USA Coaching. If the position involves a contact sport, the school will likely require concussion management training, so mention that if you've completed the relevant courses. These certifications will make you stand out to the hiring committee, as they demonstrate that you're prepared to meet the school's safety standards.

High School Basketball Coach Cover Letter Sample

Your Name

Address, Phone, email

Dear [Hiring Manager's Name, Athletic Director],

As an accomplished and enthusiastic high school basketball coach, it is with great enthusiasm that I submit my application for your open position. I am confident that my skills and experience will make me a valuable asset to your team.

Throughout the course of my career, I have had the opportunity to help players acquire the skills they need to be successful in the sport. My ability to develop strategies, motivate players, and teach techniques have enabled me to be successful in leading teams to victories. Additionally, I have experience in developing a positive team environment, managing practices, and creating a winning atmosphere.

In addition to my coaching experience, I am also a (Job position besides coaching). I am certified in CPR/First Aid and Concussion training. I am highly knowledgeable in basketball rules, game strategies, and conditioning techniques. Furthermore, I understand the importance of promoting good sportsmanship and creating an environment of respect.

I am confident that my qualifications make me an ideal candidate for your high school basketball coaching position. I am very excited to be considered for the opportunity and look forward to discussing my qualifications in further detail. Please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

From maxresumes.com

[High School Basketball Coach Cover Letter Writing Tips

Your high school basketball coach cover letter is the first impression you make on a potential employer, so it's important to make sure it's as professional and polished as possible. Here are some tips to help you write an effective cover letter for a high school basketball coaching position:

- Identify the goals and vision of the school, and explain how you can help them achieve these goals. Describe your basketball coaching experience, and how you can use it to benefit the school's program.
- Talk about your leadership style, and how it can help the team reach their goals. Explain how you can bring enthusiasm and positive energy to the team.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the game and how you can help the team improve their skills. Showcase your expertise in teaching and motivating players.
- Highlight your passion for basketball and coaching, and how you can use it to build relationships with players.
- Showcase your organizational and communication skills, and how you can use them to help manage the team.
- Make sure to include any awards or recognition you have earned for your coaching abilities.

Following these tips will help you create an effective and professional high school basketball coach cover letter that will stand out from the competition and give you the best chance of getting hired. Good luck!

Common mistakes to avoid when writing High School Basketball Coach Cover letter

Are you a student looking for a High School Basketball Coach position? If so, writing a strong cover letter is a key step in the job search process. A cover letter should be tailored to the position you are applying for and should showcase your specific skills and experience. However, there are some common mistakes to avoid when writing a cover letter for a coaching job.

- **Not Customizing the Letter:** It's important to customize your cover letter for each coaching job you apply for. A generic cover letter that doesn't address the specific job requirements is not likely to be effective. Make sure to tailor your letter to the job you are applying for and include specific examples that demonstrate your ability to fulfill the job requirements.
- **Not Being Specific:** Your cover letter should be concise and specific, not long and generic. Include specific examples of your past coaching

experience, such as wins or championships, and any unique experiences that set you apart from other applicants.

- **Not Selling Yourself:** Your cover letter should be a sales pitch, so make sure to use it to market yourself and your experience. Highlight your skills and experiences that make you the best candidate for the job and make sure to include any awards or accomplishments that demonstrate your qualifications.
- **Not Following Instructions:** When applying for a coaching job, make sure to follow the application instructions correctly. If the school requests a certain type of cover letter or any other specific documents, make sure to provide them. Not following instructions can be a sure way to eliminate you from consideration.

By avoiding these common mistakes, you can ensure that your cover letter stands out and showcases your qualifications for the High School Basketball Coach position. Good luck with your job search!

Key takeaways

Writing a cover letter for a High School Basketball Coach position is a great way to showcase your skills and experience. It is important to demonstrate your enthusiasm for the role and your commitment to the team. Here are some key takeaways for writing an impressive cover letter:

- **Highlight your basketball coaching experience:** Showcase your basketball coaching experience in your cover letter. Point out relevant skills, such as developing strategies and managing team dynamics.
- **Show your passion for the sport:** Your cover letter should be an opportunity to demonstrate your passion for the game and your commitment to helping the team succeed.
- **Demonstrate your knowledge of the team and the sport:** Having knowledge of the team and the game will make your cover letter stand out. Show your understanding of the team's strengths and weaknesses and explain how you can add value.
- **Talk about how you can help the team:** You should focus on how you can help the team achieve its objectives. Explain how you can contribute to the team's success and how your skills can help them reach their goals.

- **Include other relevant experience:** Include any relevant experience that can help you stand out from other candidates. Emphasize your leadership and organizational skills and any other experiences that can make you an asset to the team.
- **Use a professional tone:** Your cover letter should be written in a professional tone. Make sure to use proper grammar and spelling and provide a clear, concise message.

Writing a cover letter for a High School Basketball Coach position can be a daunting task. Following these key takeaways, however, will ensure that you create an impressive cover letter that will make you stand out from the competition.] **maxresumes.com**

In addition to the letter of interest, you'll need a resume. Your resume should focus on your coaching experience, including the teams you've worked with, any championships or accolades you've achieved, and any certifications or workshops you've attended. Including a couple of letters of recommendation can also strengthen your application. Ideally, these should come from colleagues in the coaching or educational fields who can speak to your abilities as a coach.

Here are some **coach resume examples** to help you get started:

- **Resume Genius:** Offers six coaching resume examples for various coaching roles, along with writing tips to highlight your skills and experience effectively.
- **Resume Builder:** Provides six coaching resume examples and templates specifically designed for 2025, making it easy to create a professional resume.
- **BeamJobs:** Features seven coaching resume examples that can help you win the job in 2025, showcasing different styles and formats.
- **Max Resumes:** Includes examples of sports coach resumes, which can be useful if you're applying for a sports coaching position.

These resources will give you a solid foundation to create your own coaching resume.

While you may submit your application electronically, I highly recommend hand-delivering your materials to the Athletic Director if possible. This personal touch

shows that you're genuinely interested in the position and gives you a chance to introduce yourself directly. You want to make a strong first impression, and delivering your application in person is a great way to do that.

Most schools now have an online application process to fill out. Fill out the online applications fully and honestly. Do not leave out schools you have worked at or if you have been asked to leave a position. You may think that this will make you unqualified for a position, but lying on an application will take you out of consideration immediately, or if you get the job, it is likely to result in immediate removal from that position.

The Interview: Preparing for Success

If you're fortunate enough to be called in for an interview, it's time to prepare thoroughly. The interview is where you have the opportunity to really shine and demonstrate why you're the best fit for the position. Start by researching the school and its athletic program. Find out who held the coaching position previously and why they left. Look into the team's performance, the school's athletic goals, and the overall environment of the program. This information will allow you to tailor your answers to the specific needs of the school.

One of the most important things to understand is the school's policies and culture. You should familiarize yourself with the athletic handbook, any rules of sportsmanship, and the school's overall Code of Conduct. During the interview, you'll want to reference specific policies that align with your coaching philosophy. This shows that you've done your homework and that you're invested in the program's success.

As you prepare for the interview, it's important to think about the qualities that employers are looking for in a candidate. These include capability, confidence, concern, command, and communication. Employers want to see that you have the capability to do the job, confidence in your coaching abilities, genuine concern for the athletes and the organization, leadership skills (command), and strong communication abilities. Keep these traits in mind when you respond to interview questions.

It's also helpful to anticipate some common questions you might be asked. For example, you may be asked about your coaching philosophy. Be prepared to explain your approach to coaching and why it works. It's always a good idea to write down your coaching philosophy ahead of time so you can refer to it if needed during the interview. You might also be asked about your experience, how you would handle a parent confronting you about their child's playing time,

or to describe a typical practice. These are all questions you should be ready to answer confidently and with specifics.

Questions you should be prepared for

What is your coaching philosophy and how has it evolved over the years?

How would you handle conflict between two players on your team?

What strategies do you use to motivate your athletes both on and off the field/court?

How do you manage relationships with assistant coaches and support staff?

What is your approach or philosophy to managing playing time among athletes at different skill and/or grade levels?

How do you handle disciplinary issues within the team?

Describe your communication style with athletes, parents, and administration.

How do you stay current with changes in rules, regulations, and best practices within your sport?

How do you foster a positive team culture and promote good sportsmanship?

How do you involve the local community in supporting your team?

What steps do you take to ensure academic success for your student-athletes?

How do you handle budgeting and resource allocation for your team?

How do you handle situations where an athlete may be struggling with personal issues outside of their sport?

What legacy do you hope to leave as a head coach?

More questions and answers at

<https://interviewprep.org/head-coach-interview-questions/>

When answering questions, try to incorporate examples from your past coaching experiences. For instance, if asked how you would handle a difficult parent, explain how you would follow a protocol that involves a 24-hour cooling-off period before scheduling a meeting with the parent, player, and coach. This shows that you're calm, organized, and fair when dealing with sensitive issues.

Another great tip is to bring something to the interview that demonstrates your preparedness. You could bring several copies of your best practice plans, for example, or a notebook filled with questions you have about the program. Being organized and prepared will demonstrate your professionalism and commitment to the job. Also, remember to speak confidently, maintain good posture, and use hand gestures to emphasize key points. How you present yourself is as important as what you say.

At the end of the interview, it's essential to ask questions that show your interest in the position and help you determine whether the job is a good fit.

You might ask:

- What is the process for hiring assistant coaches?
- How much is the coaching salary?
- What days and times are available for training? Weekend days and times.
- Would I be able to have conditioning time in the off-season?
- Would I be able to use the facilities to help grow a youth program at the middle and elementary levels by hosting a clinic or two? To help our youth coaches!

Asking about opportunities to develop youth programs or run clinics can also show that you're thinking long-term about building the program.

When closing the interview, express your genuine interest in the position. You might say something like, "Thank you for your time today. I really believe I could excel in this position and would love to contribute to your program. Are there any concerns about my candidacy that I can address?" If there are no concerns, close with, "Fantastic, I really want this coaching position, and I feel I'd fit in well with your program. I look forward to hearing from you soon and getting started on building a legacy here at [School Name]."

Following Up

Within 24 hours of the interview, send a thank-you email. In this email, express your gratitude for the opportunity and reiterate your enthusiasm for the position. Let them know you're available to answer any additional questions they might have and that you're excited to move forward in the process.

If you're selected for the position, you may be asked for a second interview with the principal, the AD, and possibly even the Superintendent. Be sure to research the individuals who will be present and prepare accordingly.

Once you've been offered the job, there will be some administrative steps to complete. You'll need to undergo a background check and fingerprinting, which are standard procedures in most school districts. You may also need to fill out various forms required by the school system. Take this opportunity to ask for a tour of the school. Meeting staff members and familiarizing yourself with the facilities is important, as first impressions matter.

Finally, remember that the AD is your key resource. Be sure to ask questions about facilities, resources, and any other details that will help you succeed as a coach. Once all the paperwork is complete, it's time to get to work, connect with your athletes, and begin preparing for the season ahead.

I took 27 high school boys on a Rugby Tour to Italy along with my assistant coach who is Italian (thank goodness- they did not speak English or cared to) and two parent volunteers. Now I said at the tour meeting with all the players' parents to make sure your passport is up to date and accepted in Italy. Well, we arrive at Rome and customs wants to see the passports for these lovely high school players dressed in their #1's (that would be shoes, khakis, white dress shirt with tour tie and Blue Blazer- looking sharp). So, I handed over 28 passports (Don't think for a second that I would let the players hold their passports on them- no way), now 26 were blue cased passports (including mine, all USA) and we had two red cased passports- one from Japan and one from Peru. The customs person with a soldier behind him with an Ak-47 says I need to see these two people with the Red passports. I said "OK" and called up the two players thinking no big deal. Wrong! My poor Peruvian player is brought back into an interrogation room and strip searched and yelled at and told that he is on the next flight back to the US. My Japanese player is interrogated and brought back out to the team with a warning to have some sort of approval before entering Italy. We finally get to see my player who is crying and my assistant starts talking to security in Italian and making some sort of deal. I get everyone else out to our Tour Bus and explain the situation and that one of our teammates may be heading home very shortly and I will have to send a parent volunteer back with him. Well, what

happened is that my assistant bribed the security guards with \$400 to let us take our player with us as soon as they went on their next shift change. We waited two hours and sneaked him out to our bus and off we went on our lovely tour. You may wonder how he got back at the end of our tour? When we checked in to go home you can be sure that when I was asked for passports, I presented 26 nice and Blue USA passports and kept a couple Red ones in my pocket. The moral of the story is when travelling that you make sure all passports are accepted and all are up to date.

Chapter 2: Your Philosophy of Coaching

Outline

Build your Philosophy

Let it guide you

*There was a rumor that a local high school team had leaked a video that showed players hazing other players in their own team locker room. Players were allegedly punching and kicking younger players for fun. I imagined that this could happen to one of my own boys and that this happens more often than we would want to believe. Supposedly, this was investigated and nothing was found to be unlawful. Though I think this event may have been “swept under the carpet”, I believe my coaching philosophy and what I expected from our captains and players through my life lessons would have stopped this from ever happening. Younger people are naive and sometimes stupid, don’t assume they know what is right and what is wrong. Constant reminders and support from your coaches at training sessions can be the difference in saving someone or a group from making huge mistakes. Remember, as a Coach you are a **mandated reporter**—meaning, if you are aware of a criminal act or the safety of your players are in jeopardy and you know this; you must report this to your school’s administration within 24 hours.*

Coaching Is a Skill, and You Have to Really Love It to Put in the Time

Coaching is not just about drawing up X's and O's or running drills. It's about shaping the lives of your players, developing a team culture, and fostering an environment where athletes feel valued, supported, and inspired to grow. Your philosophy of coaching is the foundation of everything you do as a coach—it will guide your approach, inform your decisions, and set the tone for how you interact with your players.

Why Your Philosophy Matters

Your coaching philosophy is the lens through which you view every aspect of your team. It's the educational framework that will guide you in teaching not just

the sport, but important life lessons. Some coaches have a strong, clearly defined philosophy that shapes their leadership, while others are more focused on the technical aspects of the game—skills, strategies, and X's and O's—and less concerned with developing a cohesive team culture. They expect players to automatically fall in line with their approach and find their place on the team. But let's be honest: without a strong, supportive team culture, all the strategy in the world won't make your team successful in the long run.

As a coach, I learned this the hard way. Early on, I focused too much on the X's and O's and not enough on the culture of the team. Over time, I realized that the success of a program isn't just about teaching plays; it's about creating an environment where players feel like they belong, are supported, and are encouraged to push themselves both on and off the field. Once I shifted my focus to building a strong team culture, that's when our program really began to thrive.

Some of the most memorable experiences from my playing days, both positive and negative, came during the bus rides to and from games. A bus ride can be a microcosm of a team's culture. If players feel isolated, unappreciated, or excluded, those rides can quickly turn toxic. As a coach, you are responsible for setting the tone. If your players feel respected and valued, they will carry that positive energy into every aspect of their performance. But if they feel neglected or marginalized, you can expect team morale and performance to suffer.

Imagine going into work every day and being surrounded by colleagues who didn't care about you, who didn't treat you fairly, and who made you feel isolated. How long would you stick with that job? Your players are no different. They need to feel valued to be motivated and to reach their full potential.

Hazing and Its Impact on Team Culture

One of the most disturbing aspects of team culture is hazing. It's an issue that continues to plague high school and college athletics. As coaches, we must take a strong stance against hazing in all forms. If players are allowed to engage in hazing, it's a direct reflection of a toxic team culture.

If there's one thing I learned as a coach, it's that your team culture must be built on respect, care, and support for one another. If players feel safe and valued, hazing will never happen. But if you fail to create a positive, supportive environment, toxic behavior will creep in, and it will poison the team dynamic.

Remember, you are responsible for your players' safety—physically, emotionally, and mentally. If your leadership and the culture you foster don't

create a safe and supportive space for every player, then you're failing as a coach. Your athletes are looking to you for guidance and leadership, not just in practice but in their everyday lives. Teach them how to be kind, respectful, and supportive of one another, and they will carry those lessons long after the season is over.

Teaching Beyond the Game

As a coach, you're not just preparing players to compete on the field—you're preparing them for life. The lessons they learn from you will impact them far beyond the sport. This is why I always made it a point to emphasize life skills, character development, and personal responsibility alongside the technical aspects of the game.

I remember one of my first practices after tryouts, where the theme for the week was **Team Unity and Inner Drive**. We talked about the importance of creating a team environment where every player felt they had a voice, and we stressed the responsibility each player has to their teammates. I wrote a thought for the day on the whiteboard: "The name on the front of your jersey is more important than the name or number on the back." This simple message reminded the players that success comes from teamwork, not individual accolades.

Your coaching philosophy will help drive themes for the week, thoughts for the day, and, most importantly, the values that you want to instill in your athletes. It all starts with the culture you create from day one.

Crafting Your Own Philosophy

Now, it's time for you to begin crafting your own philosophy of coaching. There are a few things to consider as you develop your approach:

- **Be true to yourself.** Your philosophy should reflect your beliefs and values. Don't try to emulate someone else's philosophy if it doesn't align with who you are.
- **Clarify your objectives.** What do you want to achieve with your team? What kind of team culture do you want to create? What impact do you want to have on your players?
- **What do your players need?** Understand the needs of your players—both as athletes and as individuals. Your philosophy should be flexible enough to support their growth and development.

Start drafting your philosophy by completing this sentence:

"I am a _____ (type of coach) who would like to see _____ (team qualities) and _____ (player qualities). My goal is to create _____ (team culture style) to reach _____ (team and personal success)."

Keep it brief and simple at first, and then revise it over time. Ask colleagues, mentors, or people you trust to read it and provide feedback. The more you refine it, the more it will resonate with you and your players.

Here's an example of a philosophy I developed and refined over time:

"Our philosophy is to create a culture where our girls become women with dignity and integrity, who demonstrate empathy for all people. We want our players to become responsible leaders and make the world a better place."

That was my guiding principle. It reflected what I wanted for my players—not just as athletes, but as people.

Philosophies from Other Coaches

To help inspire you, here are some coaching philosophies from well-known coaches:

- **John Wooden:** "The star of the team IS the team" and the "we" before "me" mindset. Wooden believed that team success is more important than individual accolades, and that everyone has a role to play in achieving victory.
- **Phil Jackson:** Jackson emphasized the importance of empowering all players on the team, not just the stars. He believed in creating a structure that would allow everyone to grow and thrive as individuals, while still working together for the collective success of the team.
- **Samantha A. Lambert:** "I am a Coach because of my passion for my work. I am able to foster the growth of my players through the numerous opportunities I am fortunate to provide. I will mold a group of individuals to communicate, to be responsible and to hold themselves accountable. I believe in nurturing their dreams to be the best on and off the court."

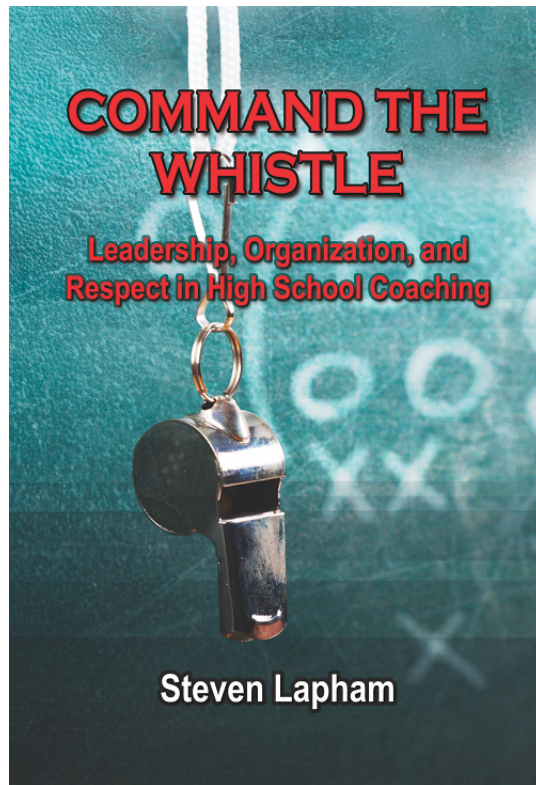
These are just a few examples, but you can see the common threads of team unity, individual growth, and fostering leadership and responsibility. Your own

philosophy doesn't need to be complicated, but it should clearly articulate who you are as a coach, what you want for your team, and how you plan to achieve that.

Your philosophy will evolve over time as you gain experience and encounter new challenges. But once you have a strong, guiding philosophy, you'll find that it becomes the cornerstone of your coaching career, shaping not only the success of your teams but also the development of your players as people.

Don't be afraid to go back and reflect on your philosophy. Are you teaching and treating your players based on your philosophy? Are the wins and losses affecting your philosophy? Are your players demonstrating themselves in a positive way that reflects your philosophy?

Superstition or Philosophy. I have learned not to call out at practice that "this is the last play". I did that once the day before our league championship. The Last Play or Last Point turned into a bad idea when a younger player came under the net and our star middle lands on the players foot and tears up her ankle. I'm not superstitious I think, but I won't say "this is my last run on the ski mountain today", I always say "Well, that was my last run". Just saying;



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