

Tiger Basketball Players:

We are nearing the beginning of a very exciting year for Tiger Girls Basketball. A solid completion of the season last year, plus a great off-season effort this summer by many girls, are setting us up for great possibilities this winter. I hope you are as excited as I am to reach new heights. I think we can win, even win big, at every level from freshmen to varsity.

As always, along with great opportunities come great challenges. High goals are never met unless one is willing to meet equal-sized challenges along the way. We have those challenges awaiting us, and I think we are up to meeting them.

Here are a few of the challenges I see standing before us:

1. **Ten seniors.** That's a big number for any basketball team. We need to go into the season with our eyes open. There is no way that ten seniors are all going to get all the playing time they want. I think we have a group of seniors who understand this; who understand that they must always focus on the team first; who understand that many of the benefits of competitive sports don't have anything to do with how many minutes one plays or how many shots one takes. I expect a unified, unselfish group to lead this team.
2. **Fast-break basketball.** It's no secret that we won't be the biggest team in the state. I think we are, though, one of the most athletic. To take advantage of this we need to up our commitment to transition basketball, running the ball at people all the time. There is no way to do this with out being in superior condition. There is no way to be in superior condition without working hard at conditioning. We must run more this year; doing great things is never easy.
3. **Bigger numbers in the program.** I anticipate from the great numbers we had involved in our summer program, that we will have more girls involved in the program overall. This is a good

problem to have, but it will require more coordination and communication to make practices productive. We will probably use some different combinations of girls; lines may blur between freshmen, sophomore, JV and varsity teams at times. Coaches may be working with different combinations of girls at different times in practice. Players will need to play a greater role in organizing practice and communicating changes. It will be a mental challenge to go along with the physical tests.

4. **More competition.** With greater numbers comes more competition for playing time. That is just what this program needs. Good athletes become better when challenged, so we are going to focus more and more on competing at practice. We are going to 'keep score' on more and more things this winter. Those who rise to the challenges will be our best players, and everyone will have a chance to show daily where they belong in the pecking order. There is no evidence at all that competitive teams have less unity. In fact, the opposite is true. Competing against one another, driving one another to be better is how teams are built. We must embrace this to take this program to the level we want it at.

Something that I think can help us deal with these challenges and any others are the list of core values that follows this note. I think these values will help us focus on our true purposes and the valuable things that athletics can teach. We have a diverse and talented group; a very intelligent group. And, I think those qualities are going to carry us to a great year.

I look forward to getting started. Good luck to those of you finishing your fall seasons. Do great things; then refresh your batteries and get ready to do more great things this winter.

Coach Mays

