

Coaches **CORNER**

By Clinton S.



Andy Colville

Godby High School

Andy Colville has been coaching for 21 years at multiple schools around the country including Marianna, Rickards, Chipola and Chipley High Schools as well as Tallahassee Community College, Dixie College in Utah and the University of New Orleans. He is now the head basketball coach for Godby High School in Tallahassee.

Moving frequently is nothing new for Coach Colville. His father was in the park service and volunteered to be stationed at various locations including California, Texas and Liberty Island in New York where his neighbor was the Statue of Liberty.

He attended Cal State at San Bernardino and finished his education at Florida State after breaking his wrist – an injury that rendered him unable to continue his own career as a player. The transition to coaching, though, was a natural one. “I’m very competitive – and coaching is another way to compete after being a player,” he says. After graduating with a degree in physical education he began coaching and is now settled in Tallahassee with his wife Cassandra and five kids Adriene, Jshon, Toni, McKenzie and Makayla.

To temper his competitiveness, coach Colville took up golf. “I like to golf because I’m not any good at it. I like being away from everything. As passionate and intense as I usually get it’s nice to just get away and be the opposite,” he says of the game.

In 1992 Colville was an assistant coach under his mentor, Jackie Pons, for the 1992 Rickards State Championship team. In 96 and 97, while coaching as an assistant at TCC, his team won the FCC Junior College State Championship and finished third in the country. Back at Rickards in 2001 and 2005 he took the Raiders to the Florida Final Four. He is a member of the Florida Athletic Coaches Association, has coached three Big Bend Players of the Year and boasts a 218-69 all-time win/loss record.

Coach Colville has high standards for his players. “To play for me your going to have to be mentally tough and physically tough. They’ve got to be good kids. They’ve got to do what their supposed to do in the classroom. They’ve got to do what they’re supposed to do on the court. I don’t have many rules other than go to class, be on time, play hard, and behave,” says the coach.

To encourage physical toughness Coach Colville’s team lifts weights four days a week during the offseason, but practice on the court takes precedence during season.

The goals are kept high – even if they are unattainably so. “We set the goals high because even if you don’t achieve them you’re still going to be better than if you set them low and do achieve them. Every year that I’m here, or anywhere I’m coaching, our first goal is to get to Lakeland, the Final Four, and see what happens. In our locker room we’ve got a sign ‘The road to Lakeland goes through these doors.’”

The coach also recognizes the greater joys of coaching. He has a connection with his players that transcends winning or losing. “If I had a choice of winning the state championship or coaching them and not winning one I’d still stay with them. I wish I had both, but they mean more to me than you can imagine.”

“Once I coach these guys they are my family forever. People say that, but I truly mean it. These guys fought for me and I owe everything to them. I try to work hard and I try to do everything for them. I don’t think you realize how much they care about you while they are playing for you; you realize how much they care about you later when someone tells you.”

In 2005, while coaching for the University of New Orleans Coach Colville experienced firsthand the devastating power of Hurricane Katrina. The storm dumped over four foot of water into his home. “There are not too many college coaches in the country that were affected by Katrina. There are about four or five of us that had to go through what we had to go through. And I still feel for the people there, it’s a once in a lifetime ordeal,” he recalls of the storm.

Among the influences of his life Colville recognizes his mother and wife as the biggest. In the coaching arena, however, he has no doubt as to who made him into who he is today. “I think my biggest coaching idol by far is Legendary Coach John Wooden. I was lucky enough to go to his camps for five or six years. He treated every camper like they were one of his players and he had four or five hundred people in there. Whereas all these other guys collect money now he would be up on the stage for three hours telling us what to do with a microphone. I’ll never be as good a person as he is and I’ll never be as good a coach. He’s a national treasure.”

Coach Colville has learned a lot in his career as a coach, including how to deal with adversity. “You’re going to be behind in games. People are going to make shots, people are going to dunk the ball, and you’re going to have bad calls. I ask ‘what do you do after?’ Even If it’s a bad call, you’ve got to get through it.”

Of his strongest memories are the losses, “I tell my players you can have the wins and I’ll take the losses.”

And at the age of 44 Coach Colville plans to continue coaching for the foreseeable future. “I plan to coach as long as I’m healthy and I still have enough energy – God willing.”

