

Coach John Wooden's most insightful model to discuss his idea is the methodology he used to prepare, execute and improve his practices. He was not satisfied with simply having achievement in each activity, but rather he sought to maximize achievement without stifling initiative.

The four components Coach Wooden utilized were proper planning and execution of the plan, relentless attention to detail, maximizing the use of time, and post-practice analysis for improvement. He described the importance of each in his book *Practical Modern Basketball*.

### 1. Proper Execution of the Plan

"A daily practice plan should be prepared and followed. If you fail to follow the program on one thing, it may affect others. If you planned poorly, make the corrections for the following day, but never alter your program on a specific day once practice has started. Running overtime can be distasteful for both you and your players and should be avoided."

### 2. Attention to Detail

"The coach should be on the floor early to make certain that everything is ready for practice. I like to have a checklist for the managers to go by, but the coach must make sure. Some of the points on the checklist: See that the floor is clean. See that the desired number of balls are available and that they are clean and properly inflated. Make sure the scrimmage shirts are on hand and that extra shoelaces and other emergency equipment items are near at hand. Have statistical charts ready for use. Make sure that towels, tape and everything else that might be necessary to ensure a smooth practice are available.

"Anticipate from past experience and be prepared."

### 3. Maximize use of time.

"Even though a particular drill may be emphasizing one specific fundamental, other fundamentals in use should not be overlooked. Sometimes players get careless about their passing during shooting drills, which may lead to breaking down one fundamental while building another."

When Coach Wooden ran a rebounding drill, his players were also improving their passing, cutting, timing and movement without the ball.

### 4. Post-Practice Analysis

"The coach should make a careful analysis of each practice while it is still fresh in his mind, in order that he may plan intelligently for the next day. I like to sit down with my assistants immediately after practice and briefly analyze and discuss the practice of that day. I make notes at that time to serve as reference to help me the next morning when I plan practice for that day."

It is easy to see why failing to prepare is preparing to fail and never mistake activity for achievement get along so well.

What are the activities of your team that don't yield the most productive results possible?

*As Coach Wooden's grandson-in-law, Craig Impelman had the opportunity to learn Coach's teachings firsthand and wrote about those lessons for his site, [www.woodenswisdom.com](http://www.woodenswisdom.com). He is a motivational speaker and the author of *Wooden's Wisdom*, a weekly "e-coaching module" that is distributed to companies nationally.*

"Never mistake activity for achievement." –John Wooden

NEVER MISTAKE ACTIVITY  
FOR ACHIEVEMENT