

Basketball Quotes

The invention of basketball was not an accident. It was developed to meet a need. Those boys simply would not play "Drop the Handkerchief."

Dr. James Naismith, creator of basketball

When it's played the way is spozed to be played, basketball happens in the air; flying, floating, elevated above the floor, levitating the way oppressed peoples of this earth imagine themselves in their dreams.

John Edgar Wideman

These are my new shoes. They're good shoes. They won't make you rich like me, they won't make you rebound like me, they definitely won't make you handsome like me. They'll only make you have shoes like me. That's it.

From a Charles Barkley commercial for basketball shoes, 1993

We have a great bunch of outside shooters. Unfortunately, all our games are played indoors.

Weldon Drew

The idea is not to block every shot. The idea is to make your opponent believe that you might block every shot.

Bill Russell

Basketball is like war in that offensive weapons are developed first, and it always takes a while for the defense to catch up.

Red Auerbach

You don't play against opponents. You play against the game of basketball.

Bobby Knight

There are really only two plays: Romeo and Juliet, and put the darn ball in the basket.

Abe Lemons

The rule was: "No autopsy, no foul."

Stewart Granger, on the pickup games of his childhood

It is not the strength of your muscles, nor the length of you arms, but the size of your heart.

Anonymous

I am sure that no man can derive more pleasure from money or power than I do from seeing a pair of basketball goals in some out of the way place - deep in the Wisconsin woods an old barrel hoop nailed to a tree, or a weather-beaten shed on the Mexican border with a rusty iron hoop nailed to one end.

Dr. James Naismith, creator of basketball

One man can be a crucial ingredient on a team, but one man cannot make a team.
Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

I try to do the right thing at the right time. They may just be little things, but usually they make the difference between winning and losing.
Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

First, master the fundamentals!
Larry Bird

Good, better, best. Never let it rest. Until your good is better and your better is best.
Tim Duncan

Basketball is like photography, if you don't focus, all you have is the negative.
Dan Frisby

I would get close to him and breathe on his goggles...
(when asked how he would guard somebody like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar)
John Kerr

Sometimes a player's greatest challenge is coming to grips with his role on the team.
Scottie Pippen

Winning is like deodorant - it comes up and a lot of things don't stink.
Doc Rivers

I can teach you how to dribble, pass and shoot the right way, but I cannot make you do it the right way.
Jeff Tufford

Basketball doesn't build character. It reveals it.
Unknown

If you think small things don't matter, think of the last game you lost by one point.
Unknown

It is not how big you are, it is how big you play.
Unknown

The harder you fall down, the higher you will bounce back up.
Unknown

You miss 100% of the shots you don't take! Shoot the hoop!
Unknown

My responsibility is getting all my players playing for the name on the front of the jersey, not the one on the back.

Unknown

Never underestimate the heart of a champion.

Rudy Tomjanovich

What you are as a person is far more important than what you are as a basketball player.

John Wooden

Pressure can burst a pipe, or pressure can make a diamond.

Robert Horry

When I was young, I never wanted to leave the court until I got things exactly correct.

Larry Bird

If you are going to take it to the bank, then you better cash it in.

Shannon Fish

They say that nobody is perfect. Then they tell you practice makes perfect. I wish they'd make up their minds.

Wilt Chamberlain

I'm tired of hearing about money, money, money, money, money. I just want to play the game, drink Pepsi, wear Reebok.

Shaquille O'Neal

We can't win at home and we can't win on the road. My problem as general manager is I can't think of another place to play

Pat Williams

I thank my teammates for letting their men blow by them.

Alonzo Mourning, on winning the Defensive Player of the Year award

My biggest thrill came the night Elgin Baylor and I combined for 73 points at Madison Square Garden. Elgin had 71 of them.

Hot Rod Hundley

I've learned I can't help the team sitting on the bench.

Wilt Chamberlain, on why he never fouled out of an NBA game

We had a special team. We played together, played to win, and everyone knew their roles... Everyone knew I was going to take all the shots.

Larry Bird, commenting at the ceremony when his Indiana State No. 33 jersey was retired

Be strong in body, clean in mind, lofty in ideals.

Dr. James Naismith, creator of basketball

Most of my learning and philosophy regarding coaching basketball was developed after great frustration.

Dick Bennett

Commitment to the team - there is no such thing as in-between, you are either in or out.

Pat Riley

I have no individual goals. We play for one reason and that's to win the title. Practice is more important than the games, and I will practice when I'm hurt, when 95 percent of the players in this league would sit out. I expect all of you to do the same thing. You will follow my lead.

Michael Jordan

Don't do more than you can do, but don't do less either.

Jeff Fletcher

Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success

Henry Ford

It's not the hours you put in, it's what you put in the hours.

Unknown

It doesn't matter who scores the points, it's who can get the ball to the scorer.

Larry Bird

The only important shot you take is the next one. Because no matter how hard you try, that is the only one you can still have an effect on!

Jason Bumblis

Great defense consists of 3 R's: read, react, and rotate.

P. Carr

If you pay attention to the grandstands...it won't be long before you join them.

Unknown

Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.

John Wooden

It's what you learn, after you know it all, that counts.

John Wooden

The best teams have chemistry. They communicate with each other and they sacrifice personal glory for the common goal.

Dave DeBusschere

Teamwork: The fuel that produces uncommon results in common people.
Unknown

Those who have invested the most are the last to surrender.
Unknown

Basketball is a game that gives you every chance to be great, and puts every pressure on you to prove that you haven't got what it takes. It never takes away the chance, and it never eases up on the pressure.
Coach Bob Sundvold

When I had troubles, I'd go out—with basketball. You can do it by yourself, too. So you'd go out and shoot, and you'd fantasize.
Duke University head coach Mike Krzyzewski

A winner is someone who recognizes his God-given talents, works his tail off to develop them into skills, and uses these skills to accomplish his goals.
Larry Bird

Goals determine what you're going to be.
Julius Erving

Don't let the fear of the time it will take to accomplish something stand in the way of your doing it. The time will pass anyway; we might just as well put that passing time to the best possible use.
Earl Nightingale

When I played with Michael Jordan on the Olympic team, there was a huge gap between his ability and the ability of the other great players on that team. But what impressed me was that he was always the first one on the floor and the last one to leave.
Steve Alford

I never looked at the consequences of missing a big shot... when you think about the consequences you always think of a negative result.
Michael Jordan

The biggest failure of all is the person that never tries.
Dr. Larry Kimsey

I don't recruit players who are nasty to their parents. I look for players who realize the world doesn't revolve around them.
Pete Carill

Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living and your belief will help create the fact.

William James

There is nothing more important than rebounding... don't just give it lip service.

Don Meyer

I always talked to my players about today. It's the only day that matters.

John Wooden

The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.

Vince Lombardi

I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more luck I have.

Thomas Jefferson

You can't get much done in life if you work only on the days when you feel good.

Jerry West

Motivation is a fire from within. If someone else tries to light that fire under you, chances are it will burn very briefly.

Stephen R. Covey

Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going.

Unknown

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.

Aristotle

I am grateful for all my problems. After each one was overcome, I become stronger and more able to meet those that were still to come. I grew in all my difficulties.

JC Penney

The person who sends out positive thoughts activates the world around him positively and draws back to himself positive results.

Norman Vincent Peale

The key to success is to keep growing in all areas of life - mental, emotional, spiritual, as well as physical.

Julius Erving

Never let your head hang down. Never give up and sit down and grieve. Find another way. And don't pray when it rains if you don't pray when the sun shines.

Leroy 'Satchel' Paige

No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit.

Helen Keller

The greatest revolution of our generation is the discovery that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.

William James

Champions do not become champions when they win an event, but in the hours, weeks, and months, and years they spend preparing for it. The victorious performance itself is merely a demonstration of their championship character.

Michael Jordan

In evaluating the way in which ball possessions are gained during the course of a game, we find that 60 to 80 percent of the possessions are gained by rebounding and after an opponent's score. Twenty percent come from opponent's error, and only 5 percent of the possessions come from steals and interceptions. A study of the way ball possessions are gained makes it seem highly impractical to base pressure defense on interceptions and steals.

Ralph Miller, former Oregon State coach (674 victories)

There is no limit to what can be accomplished when no one cares who gets the credit.

John Wooden

Great players and great teams want to be driven. They want to be pushed to the edge. They don't want to be cheated. Ordinary players and average teams want it to be easy.

Pat Riley

Offense is spacing and spacing is offense.

Chuck Daly

The psychology instructor had just finished a lecture on mental health and was giving an oral test. Speaking about manic depression, she asked, 'How would you diagnose a patient who walks back and forth screaming at the top of his lungs one minute, then sits in a chair weeping uncontrollably the next?' A young man in the rear raised his hand and answered, 'A basketball coach?'

Old Basketball Joke

We're shooting 100 percent - 60 percent from the field and 40 percent from the free-throw line.

Norm Stewart

Son, looks to me like you're spending too much time on one subject.

Shelby Metcalf, basketball coach at Texas A&M, on what he told a player who received four F's and one D

Luck is when preparedness meets opportunity.

Earl Nightingale

You can't make a great play unless you do it first in practice.
Chuck Noll

When I was young, I never wanted to leave the court until I got things exactly correct.
Larry Bird

The time when there is no one there to feel sorry for you or to cheer for you is when a player is made.
Tim Duncan

Concentration and mental toughness are the margins of victory.
Bill Russell

Leadership is diving for a loose ball, getting the crowd involved, getting other players involved. It's being able to take it as well as dish it out. That's the only way you're going to get respect from the players.
Larry Bird

I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.
Michael Jordan

You always have to be on edge. You always have to take every practice, every game, like it is your last.
Kobe Bryant

Leadership is getting players to believe in you. If you tell a teammate you're ready to play as tough as you're able to, you'd better go out there and do it. Players will see right through a phony. And they can tell when you're not giving it all you've got.
Larry Bird

You have to be able to center yourself, to let all of your emotions go... Don't ever forget that you play with your soul as well as your body.
Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

There are plenty of teams in every sport that have great players and never win titles. Most of the time, those players aren't willing to sacrifice for the greater good of the team. The funny thing is, in the end, their unwillingness to sacrifice only makes individual goals more difficult to achieve. One thing I believe to the fullest is that if you think and achieve as a team, the individual accolades will take care of themselves. Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.
Michael Jordan

I've always believed that if you put in the work, the results will come. I don't do things half-heartedly. Because I know if I do, then I can expect half-hearted results.

Michael Jordan

So much of becoming a good athlete involves bringing other things to the table, other than physical skills. It involves intelligence, it involves many of the things that you learn during the process of being educated. How to analyze, how to assess, how to equate, how to reason.

Julius Erving