

# The Extra Point

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1036 Coach K Knew the Drill Right From the Start

Duke University men's basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski has spent 42 years in his job, and will retire at the end of the NCAA tournament that will finish in the next week. I read a story about something he did in his first season, and it has a lesson for all of us. I'm Jerry Roberts, and that's next on The Extra Point.

Coach K, as he is called, graduated from West Point, and became a captain in the Army. Upon discharge, he coached at Indiana University for a season, then five years as head coach for the West Point Army team, and then landed his current job at Duke.

His Blue Devils have played in 12 Final Fours, and have won five national championships. He has won coach-of-the-year honors multiple times, and also coached the U.S. National team to Gold medals.

I read a story about something he did right at the beginning of his Duke tenure, that came back to pay dividends. He wrote a letter to Michael Jordan, who had rejected Duke, and enrolled at arch-rival North Carolina, 10 miles away. The letter read:

*Dear Mike:*

*I am sorry to hear that you no longer have an interest in learning more about Duke University.*

*However, I do want you to know that my staff and I wish you the very best in your college career.*

*You are a fine young man and you should make an immediate impact on whatever you choose.*

*Take care and best of luck.*

*Sincerely,*

*Mike Krzyzewski, Head Basketball Coach.*

It's likely that Krzyzewski sent something similar to most players who decided to bypass Duke to play somewhere else. So, what's special about writing a letter like this and what should we learn from it?

It was pointed out that the line "you should make an immediate impact was very powerful and maybe a little sneaky.

Things don't always work out as expected. If the player doesn't become a starter on the team he chooses, then he likely doesn't make an immediate impact. Maybe he'd consider transferring to Duke as an option, because Krzyzewski seemed to believe in him.

Michael Jordan became a star with the Tar Heels of North Carolina, and went on to win six NBA championships. He never forgot Coach K or that letter.

In 1992, Krzyzewski was an assistant coach on what people called The Dream Team, an NBA all-star team that blitzed its way to the Gold medal. Jordan was the biggest star in the league, called the best player in the world, and he went out of his way to help Coach K.

Jordan asked Krzyzewski for advice and help in front of the rest of the team during practice. He called him "coach", and gave him great respect.

NBA stars are pampered, and often have huge egos. Jordan's teammates saw how he treated Krzyzewski, and they did the same.

Now, a question for you, if you've ever offered someone a job and they declined, signing on with another employer, perhaps even one of your competitors.  
(Con't.)

Did you write them a letter, wishing them the best, and suggesting they should make a big impact in the new job?

Though we have immediate ways to send messages to people, a letter via snail mail will still be meaningful today.

We live in a very small community. Even if the person who rejects you never returns, there's a decent chance they'd feel comfortable in recommending your company to others who are seeking an opportunity.

Make your job interviews challenging and fun. Drop a letter to those you interview, whether they reject you or you reject them.

Nobody can predict the future. You may connect with that person in the future, with them proving to be the perfect fit for your team.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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