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ADVICE FOR COACHING YOUR SONS By CHUCK TANK

It seems natural for coaches who love sports they coach to have visions of their sons leading their teams to championships and state tournaments.

While growing up, coaches' sons are often around the game a lot. Many grow up in the gym. My own son, Wes, went to his first basketball game in Plymouth when he was two months old. Sons see how important the game is to their fathers and their families.

They see their dad's reaction to an official's questionable block/charge call or a player's misread of a play. They also see role models, high school players they've watched and emulated throughout the week.

At some point, the dream of playing basketball in high school or beyond crystallizes in their mind. Their father, however, may have envisioned this long before.

The anticipation begins

Coach Jack Bennett turned to a colleague shortly before coaching his oldest son, Jay (at Rhinelander). The wisdom shared at the time would serve as an overriding guide for the next 12 years.

"I asked for advice from the coach who preceded me there, Tom Andres," Bennett said. "He had just finished coaching his son. He gave me good advice when I told him that I was going to be tougher on (Jay).

"He said, 'That's OK, but just so you remember that you will coach your son or daughter for a few years. You will be their father for all their lives. Do not say ... or do anything that will jeopardize that long-range relationship.'"

The education begins

As Coach Bo Ryan was compiling a masterful resume of victories, championships and honors while climbing the coaching ladder, his two sons, Will and Matt, were absorbing that basketball-rich environment.

The insightful Coach Ryan had strong feelings about what it would take for his sons to be successful in the game. Coach Ryan was all about teaching his boys similar values which he had learned back in Chester, Pa. He knew that a blue-collar desire to work was crucial.

"What I tried to instill in them was that the reason that they were coming to the gym was to see how hard the players were working," Ryan said. "I told them the reason they had towels in their hands when they were ball boys was because our players took a lot of charges and would dive on the floor a lot, and they would have to wipe up the sweat. How did they get sweaty? They worked hard."

"Coaching Our Sons" by Chuck Tank is available through Badger Books LLC. It can be ordered by calling 1-800-928-2372 or via www.badgerbooks.com

NOTES: This is the first in a series of excerpts from Dodgeville prep boys basketball coach Chuck Tank's new book, "Coaching Our Sons." Today's installment is from the chapter entitled "The Anticipation of Coaching Our Sons."