Coach Andrea Hudy's Path to...

Andrea Hudy is a hands-on strength coach whose collegiate basketball teams have played in two Final Fours.

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... Basketball Greatness

How this D1 strength coach produces champions at the University of Kansas

BY LAANNA CARRASCO, MA

desire to motivate and improve those around her sets University of Kansas head strength and conditioning coach Andrea Hudy apart from her peers. Her success is the proof: Hudy's teams have played in two Final Fours and have won nine national Division 1 championships and numerous Big 12 and Big East championships. The athletes she's coached include 66 past and present professional basketball players.

Hudy's sole concern is to develop her athletes to get better every day. Although she has worked successfully with 33 NBA players and 30 WNBA players, Hudy chooses to remain in the collegiate coaching field because she likes the year-round opportunity to influence her athletes. Collegiate sports allow Hudy to coach teamwork, camaraderie and mental toughness every day. Working with sport coaches as well as with the sports medicine and nutrition departments, Hudy enjoys helping the athletes develop the building blocks that will bring them success in physical competition and in their future lives.

"It's great to be a part of the teams. Every day is an accomplishment, and I thank God for the opportunity to work with these amazing groups of people toward a certain goal," says Hudy, who is an integral part of two of the most successful D1 athletic programs in the country.

She started her career as a strength coach at the University of Connecticut, where she earned her master's in biomechanics and studied with Dr. William Kraemer. But it was Hudy's loyalty to the athletic director there, Lew Perkins, that brought her to UConn. "I



What makes Hudy a rarity is her dynamism, loyalty and intelligent application of scientific principles in her training methods.

had signed my letter of intent to attend Maryland when Perkins was there. Perkins ended up at KU, and he convinced Coach Self [the men's basketball coach at KU] to give me a shot," Hudy says. "Coach Self took some convincing, but he got a lot of feedback from players I've worked with about how healthy they stayed throughout the season."

When you take a close look at Hudy's coaching triumphs (she was just named National College Strength and Conditioning Coach of the Year by the National Strength and Conditioning Association) and commitment ("I'm on call for the athletes 24/7, and I try to make it fun for the athletes to train"), you realize that what makes Hudy a rarity is her dynamism, loyalty and intelligent application of scientific principles in her training methods.

Still, the fact remains that nearly 85 percent of Division 1 strength and conditioning coaches are male, and Hudy's place in that world is unique – she is the only female director of a D1 sports performance department in the country. Has gender played a role in Hudy's success? The answer might come by looking at the traits that make the most effective leaders.

Mind over Basketball Matters

Social psychology theorist Alice Eagly suggests that women are more likely than men to posses the leadership qualities that are associated with success. Eagly thinks women are more "transformational" than men and care most about developing their followers, inspiring them, listening to them and challenging them to think outside the box.

This quality is apparent in Hudy, who has inspired her athletes by showing she cares about who they are as people. When it comes to the weightroom, Hudy does whatever it takes to motivate

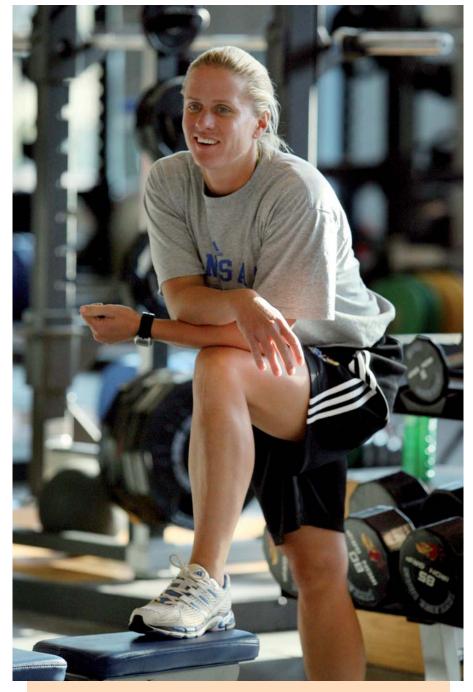
FOR WOMEN ONLY

her athletes. Further, she's in shape, can demonstrate lifts with impressive weight on the bar, and regularly conditions with the players. Hudy's got the competitive mindset of a winner and a mentor, which allows her to figure out what each individual needs to excel. She's also got the technical expertise to be progressive with training methods and has brought emerging technology into the weightroom.

For example, the day-to-day philosophy of strength training and conditioning used by Hudy and her coaching team embodies this theme of elite leadership. Hudy uses a flexible periodization model that allows her to adapt training to the complicated basketball schedule and target the individual needs of each athlete. "How you respond each day allows you to train better and play better," Hudy says.

Two of Hudy's primary goals for her athletes are achieving muscular balance and increasing power output as measured by the vertical jump. Hudy's interest in power started early. For her master's thesis at UConn, Hudy conducted one of the earliest studies looking at the negative effect of static stretching on power output. Today, Hudy works with exercise scientist Dr. Andrew Fry, conducting research on power output, performance measurements, and the cortisol stress response that athletes experience during the season. She's presently most interested in training methods for increasing peak power, an athletic skill that applies directly to basketball players who need to have a quick first step or to outjump an opponent for a rebound.

During the season, the basketball players train for high power output in the weightroom with heavy loads. Almost all of their conditioning is done in practice, and Hudy's main focus during the season is to make sure her players don't lose muscle, decrease power or get



Coach Hudy is the only female director of a D1 sports performance department in the country

run-down. The basketball teams don't do any aerobic or "cardio" training.

With mentors and colleagues that include William Kraemer, Andrew Fry, Lew Perkins and Gerard Martin, Hudy continues to rise to the challenges in the strength and conditioning field. Despite gender bias – or irrespective of it – Hudy has used her drive, compassionate coaching and technical expertise to create a remarkable career.

She offers the following advice for young women who are interested in a career in collegiate strength coaching: "Be persistent and competitive, work hard, learn to effectively communicate with all types of people and always be available for the athletes." BS

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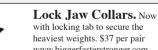
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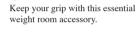
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