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Five-Star Basketball Camp: Krzyzewski motivates campers

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By Paul Zeise, Post-Gazette Sports Writer

Duke Coach Mike Krzyzewski visited the Five-Star basketball camp at Robert Morris University yesterday and spoke to a group of about 500 campers from all over the country about having success in basketball and life.

"The two best ways to have success are to learn how to be a good listener and develop a desire to be a part of something bigger than your own success," Krzyzewski said. "If you do that, you'll find that success will follow you wherever you go."

Krzyzewski, who has led the Blue Devils to three national titles and nine Final Four appearances, spoke for about 90 minutes and shared many stories about former players and some of his best teams.

He also talked about what it takes to be a Division I player and what he wants in a potential recruit.

"We look for three things," he said. "Talent, because a kid coming to Duke has to be able to play at the highest level... Academics, because a great player who isn't eligible can't help us. And the third thing, and this is what separates a player in our eyes: a player's character."

Krzyzewski used former Duke and current Orlando Magic star Grant Hill as the prime example of a player who possessed all three traits. He said Hill was not only one of the best players he has ever coached, but was also the best listener and most eager to learn. Two other former Duke players he said exemplified the well-rounded player he looks for are Michigan Coach Tommy Amaker and Philadelphia 76ers General Manager Billy King.

He also talked about the Duke philosophy of "the fist," which is five men playing as one and every member of the team, including coaches, managers and walk-ons, being treated as equals. He said the five prongs of that philosophy are communication, trust, collective responsibility, caring for each other and pride.

After the talk, he met with reporters and elaborated on his points. "I don't think having tattoos, or different-colored hair or anything outwardly, has anything to do with character," he said. "You can't judge it from the outside, but rather, character is who you are on the inside when nobody is around."

This is the fifth of the six weeks the Five-Star camp is at Robert Morris. The final session begins Sunday and its featured speakers are Florida Coach Billy Donovan, Detroit Pistons Coach Kevin O'Neil and ESPN analyst Len Elmore.