

Haase provides primer for Tahoe coaches



Jerrod Haase is a leader among coaches.
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By Kathryn Reed

Skill is only part of what it takes to win.

Character is a large component of success, even more so when it comes to team sports.

Jerrod Haase was in town Friday to impart some of his wisdom to local coaches and athletes in separate talks.

Haase was a two-time Nevada most valuable player when he played for South Tahoe High School's basketball team. Earlier this year he was hired to be the men's basketball coach at Stanford University.



Jerrod Haase offers tips to South Shore youth coaches during a talk Aug. 19 at STHS. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

His return to STHS on Aug. 19 was the first time he had been back to the campus in close to two decades. It's changed a bit since he was there, especially with an infusion of nearly \$100 million in facilities upgrades in the last few years.

The gym where two of his pictures hang (along with two of his brother, Steven) is newly renovated. Still, this is where he

started to make a name for himself.

“I learned the fundamentals for everything I am here in Tahoe,” Haase told the coaches.

Whenever he speaks, he talks about growing up here, his coaches, teachers and teammates. His roots run deep, having been the youngest of five kids – and all were exceptional athletes. His mom and sister still live here.

“He was a few years behind me, but he was a true student of the game. His court awareness was beyond his years,” Tom Fay told *Lake Tahoe News*. Fay brought his son, Sinjin who is a seventh-grader, to hear Haase speak.



Jerrod Haase, right, and Tom Fay, center, talk about their time at STHS, while Sinjin Fay listens. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

For STHS Athletic Director Tony Sunzeri it was like a homecoming to see Haase. He was a freshman when Haase was a senior.

“He was just larger than life at that time and he’s even larger now, and I didn’t think that was possible,” Sunzeri said of Haase. “He is a legend, a hero and an inspiration.”

Haase ran cross country in high school, which helped with his training to be able to run up and down the hardwood of the gym.

At 42, he is still fit and looks like he could be on the floor instead of courtside.

He recognizes that life’s lessons are on a continuum, with each stage providing an opportunity to build on the one before.

“I’ve never been the smartest guy in the room, but I have some level of common sense,” Haase said.

The goal of the gathering Friday was to help coaches be better at what they do. One asked about how to deal with social media.

Haase said to embrace it – which was not always his philosophy.

“It’s your opportunity to brand yourself,” Haase said.

Of course the flip side is when less than flattering things are posted it can turn into negative branding.

The coach believes in freedom of expression, but at the same time is adamant that when people are part of a team they need to be held accountable and that the organization can put in parameters regarding what is acceptable on social media.

“If the standards are broken, then there are consequences,”

Haase said.



Jerrod Haase and STHS Athletic Director Tony Sunzeri went to STHS for one year together. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

When he was most recently head coach at the University of Alabama, Birmingham, Haase knew he needed to define who the team was. It has to be specific or else it will get diluted.

After several months, he whittled it to honesty, loyalty, accountability, unselfishness and appreciation. It took time for the team to embrace those components and understand what they meant. And when it clicked, the team started winning.

Haase also noted that what defines a team will depend on the

institution. He is working on Stanford's motto, but knows it will be different than UAB because the universities and students are different.