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Summer is the time to separate from the pack

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HoopGurlz

There are few things more satisfying than completing spring workouts. As I mentioned earlier, spring gym time is a grind and some of the hardest workouts done all year. Then they end. It's satisfying and I'm always proud to look back at the long string of work my teammates and I have been able to put together.



Geneva Anderson works out with UW coaches and a few teammates this Spring but will be accountable to herself only this summer.

Summer is just around the corner and as individuals wrap up, coaches start putting together summer workout plans for each player. Since coaches can't be involved, the last week of spring is a good time to ask what coaches specifically want you to work on, where they want you to get stronger, and what their overall expectations are of you from June through August. It's important to talk with your teammates and understand the goals each person is looking to reach during the offseason. Summer can and will define a team for the upcoming season and as my coach has reiterated to us many times, teams that don't have successful summers will not have successful seasons.

After a long spring, I always find it refreshing to take a couple weeks off following finals week to regroup and recover from postseason workouts. I think it is healthy to get away for a few weeks, hang out with friends and family and even spend some time, well, out of time. Believe it or not, this small break is what allows me to feel fresh and ready to go once summer workouts begin.

Initially the most drastic change from spring is that coaches can't be in the gym. The players are given a packet of what to work on but the dynamic is much different when coaches just can't be there. Coaches won't be able to tell you to go harder or give you high marks to reach for. It can be so easy to become lackadaisical or even settle for less than your best. This is why it is so important to have teammates who know and understand your goals for summer.

Having a teammate who wants to help you reach your goals makes summer workouts so much more productive. This teammate can push you to go harder and try and hit higher standards. When someone else is holding you accountable to your goals, it makes it easier to not give up and not settle. It also builds camaraderie. Summer workouts are challenging and teammates who stick together through them build close bonds and have an easier time fighting hard for each other when it matters most, next season. When everyone else is out tanning in the sun, staying up late and going on vacations, knowing that you and your teammates were working hard in the hot gym builds an attitude and a toughness that carries over into the following season.



For summer workouts, being a good teammate is as important as getting your own reps in.

On every team, there are always a few players who have a harder time committing to summer workouts than others. It isn't uncommon for some players to have low motivation to get in the gym or have many priorities ahead of basketball. Since basketball is not an individual sport and requires five players to work together on the court at all times, it's important to find ways to get the unmotivated players to buy-in to what the rest of the team is committed to.

I've found a couple strategies that have helped me entice my teammates to get in the gym. To start, I've learned that just by sending out a text with the times I'll be in the gym encourages these players to come because they know they won't be alone. Also, by becoming familiar with these players' goals before summer starts, I can often hold them more accountable to gym time by reminding them of the goals they made for themselves during spring. The other tactic that has been useful for me is just simply making myself available at times that are convenient for them. For example, telling a teammate, "Hey anytime you want to shoot just let me know and I'd be more than happy to come rebound for you," makes your teammate realize you are sincerely interested in helping them improve and you really do want to help them.

Transitioning from spring to summer is always a fun time of year. By entering summer with a mindset of hard work and striving for improvement, teams can very easily build on the strong habits developed during spring. Getting everyone onboard and headed in the right direction, summer can be the first defining moment for next season. Successful summer workouts translate into successful seasons and winning makes every workout done in the hot summer heat more than worth it.

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