

John Wooden was the greatest coach ever. College or professional. In any sport. In any era. By any measurement. No question.

John Wooden was a sought-after adviser until the day he could no longer hold court. Not only for athletes in basketball but anyone who respected success with class. John Wooden was the greatest coach or manager in any sport.

His ultimate success was measured by national championships but they alone would diminish the accomplishments of John Wooden. I'll get to why I hold this view in a bit.

To those of us who grew up in Wisconsin, Vince Lombardi was a great, great coach. In nine years with the Green Bay Packers, his team won five league championships and the first two Super Bowls. He never had a losing season in ten years as an NFL head coach and, after his first year with the Pack, he never finished below second in the standings. In 1963, the Packers finished second in the NFL West with an 11-2-1 record. He passed away in 1970 at the age of 57.

Vince Lombardi was a great coach.

Bud Wilkinson was a great college football coach. As head coach at Oklahoma, the Minneapolis born, University of Minnesota college football star, led OU to three national championships in his first 13 seasons (of 17 total seasons at OU), a 6-1 Bowl Game record (when it used to mean something to play in a Bowl Game), a Big Eight conference record of 74-1-2 and an overall record of 121-13-3.

Every OU team in Wilkinson's first 13 years finished the season ranked in the top 16 college teams in the nation. His team won the Big Eight conference championship every year from 1947 to 1959, then once later - in 1962. In 17 years as head coach at Oklahoma, his team went undefeated 13 times, the first 12 in a row (two years with a tie) and two seasons had one defeat. His 17 season Big Eight record with OU was 93-9-3.

Bud Wilkinson was not a good NFL head coach. In two seasons with the St. Louis Cardinals, his team went 9-20.

Bud Wilkinson was a one great college football coach.

Casey Stengel was manager of the New York Yankees from 1949 - 1960. During that time, the Yankees won the World Series each of the first five seasons Stengel was the manager. In his 12 seasons, the Yankees won ten American League pennants and seven World Series. The only two seasons his Yankees did not play in the World Series were 1954 (when Cleveland set an AL record with 111 wins - in 154 games - then were swept in the World Series by the Dusty Rhodes-led New York Giants) and 1959, when the AL's Chicago White Sox lost in their first World Series appearance since the Black Sox Scandal of 1919.

Casey Stengel started managing the Yankees with Joe DiMaggio in center field and ended with Mickey Mantle there. Not a bad pair to build a line-up around.

Stengel's last game as manager of the Yankees was the World Series game of 1960 when Bill Mazerowski hit a walk-off home run in the bottom of the 9th inning that gave Pittsburgh the World Series in seven games. Casey was not rehired.

Casey Stengel was a great manager with the New York Yankees. Other than that stint, he managed bad teams to bad records.

Mike Krzyzewski has been head coach of the Duke basketball team for 30 seasons. His teams have won four NCAA championships, played in 11 Final Fours and have won 12 ACC championships. His Duke teams have won 77 NCAA tournament games and his teams have averaged 25 wins per season.

Coach K is a very good college basketball coach.

Now, for John Wooden.

He is a member of the Basketball Hall of Fame as both a player and a coach (only Lenny Wilkens and Bill Sharman duplicate that recognition). He was a three time high school All-State in Indiana and his team played in the state championship finals all three years - winning in 1927. Wooden was the first three-time consensus college All American and played on the 1932 Purdue national championship team.

John Wooden is often quoted, usually about the game of basketball and the game of life. He also once said, about his religious faith, "If I were ever prosecuted for my religion, I truly hope there would be enough evidence to convict me."

His first year coaching basketball, in high school, is the only losing season a team he coached ever had.

While he wanted to become head coach at the University of Minnesota, communications were lost and he thought they had no interest so he accepted the UCLA job.

After 11 successful seasons, but no national championships while UCLA played in the Pacific Coast Conference, the Pac 8 Conference was formed and UCLA was on its way. From the 1963-1964 season through the 1974-1975 season (12 years) UCLA won ten national championships. In one of the two years they did not win the national championship, they took 3rd place in the NCAA tournament.

During this era, freshmen could not play varsity sports so players like Lew Alcindor (Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) and Bill Walton had to wait out that first year. Nor could players "dunk" ('67-'75) and in the 1973 NCAA championship game, Walton was 21-22 in field goal shooting and had baskets taken away from him for dunking.

Unlike Lombardi and Stengel, who could buy a needed player (Roger Maris, etc.), Wooden reloaded several times in his run of national championships. He is, by any measurement, the greatest coach of all time.

Campaign Yard Signs



21st and House, Cheyenne - June 23, 2008

Cheyenne City Code prohibits campaign signs like the Lummis campaign signs above from being placed in the public right-of-way last cycle. A simple rule should state: "Campaign signs cannot be placed in the grassy area between the street and the sidewalk." Instead, City Code reads: **17-128-090 Prohibited Signs (D.) Signs placed in or encroaching upon a public right-of-way, ...**

Note: This message and photo is repeated from a 2008 issue of the Cheyenne Herald



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