

Dear Charles,

I do not know where to start this letter because whatever words I put down, they could never truly relay the thanks I want to express to you. I will do my best.

Anyone who knows Wyatt, knows that he loves basketball; loves, not likes. It is not a hobby or a pastime. Basketball is so much of who he is. His devotion to basketball has taught me so much about responsibility and commitment. I am the parent, he should be learning from me.

Ever since I can remember, when Wyatt was asked, "what do you want to be when you grow up," his response would be, "a basketball coach". As he leaves for college this fall, what once was his dream is now his plan. Playing college ball, once his dream, is now his reality. Wyatt deserves most of the credit. He has worked harder than hard. But, without meeting you, back when Wyatt was in 4th grade, his dream may have stayed just that.

Now if anyone knows you, they know your stance on "daddy coaches". So at a very young and impressionable age, someone's dad coached him and did not think he was very good. Well actually he knew Wyatt was good but told him otherwise. Every play was designed for this coach's sons. Yikes, he had 2 of them, so Wyatt had a double whammy! In grammar school you were at the mercy of the volunteers, so that was that. But what preserved Wyatt's dream was his time spent training with you. At your gym, there was, without a doubt, an even playing field. Everyone was given the same opportunity.

When kids would talk about their fantastic records playing with their selective AAU teams in out of town tournaments, Wyatt never batted an eye. He never once doubted that he was getting the best training possible. His AAU uniform did not sparkle and shine. All the kids' shoes did not match. We did not have matching bags. There was no nurse on staff (a little spit, maybe a band aid, and you were back in the game). What he did have was the best coach out there. We did not win too many games. Thank you for not scheduling us to play weaker teams so that we did have a winning record. Because the harder the team, the harder he played. The harder he played, the more he learned. He just kept getting better. Don't get me wrong, there were kids that were better than Wyatt. But I can say without a doubt, no one played tougher and no one knew the game as well as he did. Thank you for teaching him so much.

You gave Wyatt a very nice compliment recently on your website. You congratulated him, along with your other two players that go to St. Paul's, on their awards and a great season. Then you said, they were better people and you would not have it any other way. You are such a quality person. I would not have had it any other way either. Anyone who knows me knows that I would move heaven and earth for any of my kids. Thank you for always being sincere and trustworthy. You have never wavered, not for anyone or anything. You stand strong in your beliefs. Thank you for always being so honest. Thank you for not letting Wyatt believe that college scouts would be at his AAU games. But thank you for guiding him in the real process to play college ball. Everything you told him that a college coach would be looking for, was exactly what every college coach Wyatt spoke to was looking for.

Whenever anyone asks me where Wyatt has trained, I proudly say, with Charles Tracey. Some have said, "I heard he was crazy". To those I have said, "You would be crazy not to bring your child and decide that for yourself". If anyone truly wants their child to have the best opportunity to play on a high school team, your track record speaks for itself. So to make a full circle here, neither of those "daddy coached kids" made it past the 9th grade team. I have learned, to be an asset to your high school team, you need

discipline. I have seen many of your players play. You have some on every high school team over here. The traits that are consistent in all of them are: they are not ball hogs, they are not afraid of contact and they are above all, not lazy. That is what they are not. What they most definitely all are, are leaders.

You have incredible coaches in your gym, Ryan, Kenny and Alicia. I thank all of them for being such great role models and taking their time over the years to help train Wyatt. He is a better person for knowing them. They have demanded a lot, but have done so with encouragement, respect and kindness. Thank you for keeping company with such great people.

It was no surprise that, after telling us what school he decided on, he told you next. He wants to make you proud. Thanks for being that person for him. To say I will miss him in the fall is an understatement. Wyatt's commitment to basketball has brought us closer as a family. He is ready to move on to the next step. When I drop him off at Huntingdon College (Go Hawks) in the fall I will be confident that I have given him the best tools to succeed. Wyatt's academic success is directly related to basketball. The better he did in the classroom, the more time he had on the court. Nothing was going to interfere with his dream. Thank you for always stressing how important grades are.

So as I stated in the beginning, it is impossible to put my gratitude into words. Please accept this as a valiant attempt. I am not sure what the next 4 years will bring for Wyatt in college but his high school years have been the best. Thanks for giving so much of yourself to my son. You will always be a dear friend.

With respect and admiration,
Stephanie and Larry Popovich