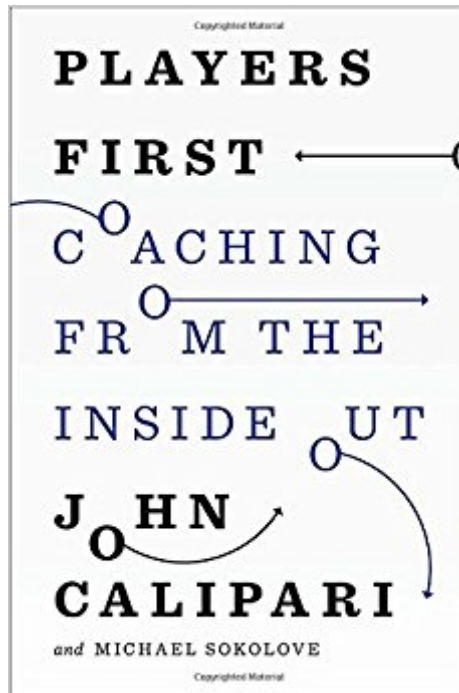


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# Players First: Coaching From The Inside Out



## Synopsis

"If you are a college basketball fan like I am, you'll understand why I've long admired John Calipari's leadership style. While no coach treasures a win more than John, this terrific book reveals his greater purpose—to lead his young players to better lives, and then challenge them to give back to others." —President William J. Clinton

In *Players First*, John Calipari relates for the first time anywhere his experiences over his first four years coaching the Kentucky Wildcats, college basketball's most fabled program, from the doldrums to a national championship, drawing lessons about leadership, character, and the path to personal and collective victory. At its core, Calipari's coaching philosophy centers on keeping his focus on the players—what they need to get the best out of themselves and one another. He is beloved by his players for being utterly honest with them and making promises that he always keeps, no matter what. He knows that in this age, they come to Kentucky to prepare for the NBA; every year he gets players who in a previous era would have gone directly into the pros from high school but now have to play college basketball for one year. Calipari has fought against this system, but he has to play within it, and so he does, better than anyone. The result is an extraordinary leadership challenge: every year Coach Cal gets a handful of eighteen-year-old kids who have been in a bubble for the previous four years at least, filled with hype about their own greatness, and they come to Kentucky feeling sure that they will play for their coach only for seven months before they go on to greater glory. Every year, he has to reinvent his team. After his 2012 NCAA championship, it was particularly dramatic; he lost his first six players in the first round, meaning that someone who couldn't even start for Kentucky was a first-round draft pick. The overall record at Kentucky, and for his career, puts Calipari in the pantheon of the greatest coaches in the history of the game. Bold, funny, and truthful, like Coach Calipari himself, *Players First* is truly the first deep reckoning with the meaning of his experiences and the gifts of insight they offer.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Penguin Press; First Edition edition (April 15, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1594205736

ISBN-13: 978-1594205736

Product Dimensions: 6.5 x 1 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (90 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #114,068 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 inÂ Books > Sports & Outdoors > Basketball > Coaching #63 inÂ Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Sports & Outdoors > Basketball #440 inÂ Books > Sports & Outdoors > Coaching

## Customer Reviews

Calipari's latest book gives you an in depth view of one of the preeminent college basketball coaches. With five trips to the Final 4 and his first national championship Calipari speaks from the perspective of a man comfortable with his position in the sport well aware that he has detractors and that he will never change the minds of these people. Subjects covered here are his faith, his recruiting pitch and philosophy, and how he treats players. The book is chock full of anecdotal stories of helping players, coaching players and dealing with family, friends and the media. From this book you get in the mind of an exceptional marketer and coach who is a lot more focused on helping and improving the lives of others. As mentioned previously, if you are not a Cal fan, you probably won't change your mind. But if you like basketball and want a view behind the curtain, buy this book and you will learn a lot. This book will be most popular with Kentucky basketball fans and there are a lot of those. But it should also be read by all basketball fans for a different perspective. I guess I need to disclose that I know Cal from his years in Memphis. I've watched him interact with those suffering with illness or death in their families. You can look at some conference title pictures and see older ladies brought in as he knew it would brighten their lives after the death of a spouse. I've been near his wife and kids and also saw a quality person that cared for his family and brightened their lives, but of course, not without his flaws as he states eloquently in this book. This book does a good job capturing the Calipari I know: friendly, outgoing, sympathetic, and a driven person who will work harder than others to succeed, not for himself, but for others.

I found this book a fascinating read, and not just because I am a UK basketball fan. This book details the rigors of running a highly successful program at a college basketball powerhouse. It also presents cogent ideas for shaping the future of the game. It's a recommended read for any college basketball fan.

I have read each of his books. They are an inspiration to me. I also steal several quotes to use in my business. His "Fail Fast" is my favorite. I work with the cafeterias across the state, and we are inundated with federal regulations. We can't be paralyzed about what we do - we have to try new

foods, influence young children, and fail fast so we can try something else if the first thing doesn't work. Regardless of your occupation, this is a great read.

Right off the bat...I am from Kentucky, born and raised. I attended UK during the Rupp's Runts Era. I am a life long fan of the Kats. I have grown to like Calipari, and who can help but LOVE his abilities to recruit! All of that out of the way, PLAYERS FIRST, Coaching From The Inside Out is a very good read. If you are a sports fan, a NCAA basketball fan, or if you need a really good explanation of "one and done" read it. If you are a UK fan the book is must reading. This book taught me a lot about Calipari, maybe you live in Wildcat country and won't learn as much as I did living in Gator Country. But I did learn a lot. This book was fun and entertaining and goes into huge detail on "one and done" logic, oh that's, "succeed and proceed." I respect John Calipari more after reading it..

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**

I am absolutely happy with the book, I read on the internet these days and I have only read a few chapters. The more I read about John Calipari, the more I respect him. His players know he will be tough on them, but he gets them ready for the NBA! Normally from a year in college, they go on to the League and millions in income and benefits for themselves and their families. Outstanding coaches and TV coverage has made such things possible! Anthony Davis may be his best player yet and Coach Cal believes he will prove to be a cut above other League members.

It was not quite what I was expecting. It definitely doesn't have the wisdom of a book from Wooden. Some of the stories are neat but I felt that techniques Calipari uses beyond hard work were lacking. The part I learned the most about (not very useful but cool to know) was the rules of the NCAA and his suggestions about changes to encourage students to stay in school and protect their futures.

I give this book five stars because it is very thorough. Coach Cal covers all bases, from the start of his career to now, and everything in between. It's part story, part motivation. I'd recommend this book to anyone who, regardless of being a Calipari fan, wants an in-depth look at the man, his teams, and, in later chapters, his chosen profession. Every player Cal has ever coached, it comes through in the book that he cares about them. It's clear that, despite what some make him out to be, that he indeed does things the right way. The in-depth stories about players, games, the way things are done and why, was very interesting reading. He takes you through every area, quickly reminding the reader that he doesn't do this job alone. He goes in depth about the aspects of the job

that his assistant coaches handle and what he handles. If you're interested in getting and in depth look at basketball and life, *Players First: Coaching From The Inside Out* is the book for you!

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