



Nikki Caldwell was for several years the assistant coach next to Pat Summit (the best woman coach in history) and now -for the first time- she will sit on the bench as a head coach, leading UCLA, one of the big favorites for this year's national title.

Caldwell gave an interview in a Los Angeles newspaper and among other things she referred to the key points for every coach of a women's team and also her philosophy.

"The first thing your team has to know is that above all what you have in mind. Where do you place the group of people you are working with. From there you have to convince the players, that they can achieve what you have decided that they can do.

When we are talking about women's sports we have to mention a lot of times the word "passion". Women have more passion in their lives, even when they work out. Personally I bet a lot on the passion of my players for this year's college title.

In my team when we are talking with each other always we end up using the word "championship". The girls, until the difficult games come, have to be convinced that they are the big favorite for the title. When they experience it, then we start facing each game but itself, dealing every opponent with its own specialties.

This year our philosophy is certain. I have explained to my players that we cannot have always a good night in offense. I have made clear to them in my 10-year career I have seen a lot of great players drag have very bad games. On the other hand the difference between a good team and the championship team is defense.

We cannot always rely to a 80-point game, but it is on our hands not to let the other team score more than 60. Defense has to do with desire and passion and as I said before can be more passionate than men.

When I was planning the team I preferred to have a lot of friendly games and less exhausting practices, even if that meant that we had to go to the gym for weight lifting or conditioning after those friendly games. They are very important in the building of a team, so our the losses in those games.

It is my first time as a head coach and I will try to pass to UCLA all my experiences as a player and as an assistant coach in some of the best teams in the USA. With me everybody know that they will have to work hard, because I was always working with coaches who loved to have terminators in the court and not passive girls who are just bouncing the ball".