



JIM HARSHAW JR.

Revealing Failure as the Path to Success

Success Through Failure Podcast

Action Plan Episode #141

Brian Boland

Coach Boland is the USTA Player Development Head of Men's Tennis. He accepted the position in 2017 after being the head coach of the University of Virginia men's tennis team where his teams won 4 of the last 5 NCAA Championships. Boland's Virginia team held a 140 match winning streak against ACC opponents which spanned from April 2006 to February 2016. This streak is the longest winning streak by any sport in ACC history.

Quotes

"I think once you ask enough questions, usually you find answers."

"Probably my greatest coach is my wife."

"Failure to me is not giving yourself a chance and putting yourself in the arena."

About Understanding the Role People Can Play

"For me it's about understanding where it is you're working, what is going to allow you to have the most success and to try to focus as much as you can on the strengths of the person or the university, everything that surrounds you, and then neutralize everything else to use those strengths as much as possible. That was my thought process when I started at Indiana State University, and that same foundation I brought with me to Virginia. With that, as you know, it always comes down to who you surround yourself with. It's about investing in people, making sure they understand what role they play in an organization you put them. You put them in the right seats so they can maximize their strengths and you provide them a strategy and accountability."

About Going Outside Your "Forest" to Understand the Big Picture

"One of the things I've always believed is in order to think creatively and outside the box, you're going to have to step outside the forest a little bit and allow yourself to think freely. Some of the best ideas that I've ever had that pertained to where I was, I

was out for a walk, jogging, occasionally just going and fishing by myself, in the shower – as crazy as that sounds. There's a lot of places and oftentimes, you'll see me – which I know those who have lived near me for over the years – I will literally stop and start writing things down, taking notes in the most bizarre places."

About Learning from Everybody

"There's always an opportunity to listen and learn from people, and to see how that might apply to what you're doing and why. I think that sometimes, we forget. It doesn't always have to be somebody that's doing exactly what you think is needed to give you a great idea. For example, I would have staff meetings once a week at UVA. It probably started out with three of us and by the time I left UVA, it was probably a dozen of us at 6 in the morning. And some of my greatest coaching ideas came from academic advisors, somebody in facilities, or it was our sports psychologists. I can go on and on."

About Believing in What You Do to Be A Better Leader

"I spent a lot of time being honest with myself as to how can I unlock these players and provide them a better peace of mind so they can use their great gifts. It started with myself. How can I have a better peace of mind? And the only way you're going to do that is to really decide why you do what you do. I know that's been said a number of times but it's not just saying it, but really meaning it. I came up with a saying that I painted all over the locker rooms and everywhere I go, and it simply was to make the world a better place through tennis. That became a real obsessive focus of mine. I started to be more open, share ideas and listen better. I became a more honest leader of myself rather than saying, 'I'm not nervous.' Everybody has fear, anxiety, and all kinds of worries and concerns."

About Learning to Balance

"If you can't take care of the entire tree, then some branches steal from another and you don't have the proper balance. All these things today that we focus on, nutrition, sleep, preparation, how we use the gym, there's so much involved and it takes such attention to detail and an enormous amount of discipline. That's what it's going to take to be great. "

Recommended Book

The Power of Positive Leadership by Jon Gordon

<https://www.amazon.com/Power-Positive-Leadership-Transform-Organizations/dp/1119351979>

Lead....for God's Sake! By Todd Gongwer

<https://www.amazon.com/Lead-Gods-Sake-Parable-Leadership/dp/1414370563>

Episodes Referred

Jon Gordon: <http://jimharshawjr.com/117/>

Website and Social

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/coachboland>