

Real Colors and Athletics

By: Stephanie Zonars, Certified Real Colors Facilitator
Penn State Women's Basketball, Leader Development and Community Outreach

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Becoming a Real Colors® facilitator is one of the most beneficial moves I've made in my business. As a team-building coach focusing on sports teams, I've found it a relevant, fun tool to help high school and college-aged athletes learn about themselves, their teammates and their coaches.

The design of the workshop sets Real Colors apart from other assessment tools. One athlete who had taken both the Myers Briggs and DiSC said she learned so much more through Real Colors. The exercise used in the second half of the workshop drives home the learning, causing coaches to tell me that their teams still talk in "colors" even months after our time together.

It's so rewarding to see the "a-ha" moments that transpire when individuals learn why they do what they do, and—equally as important—why their teammates do what they do. When the Notre Dame women's basketball team experienced Real Colors, two of their top players learned that their tense relationship was partially because they were both ultra-competitive oranges.

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What they learned helped them communicate and compete better together and that year they made it all the way to the National Championship Game! Hall of Fame Coach Muffet McGraw commented, *“The Real Colors workshop strengthened our team chemistry by getting us to understand each other better, and definitely contributed to the success of our 2011 season.”*

Real Colors has become part of the culture for many of the teams with whom I’ve worked. The 2013 NCAA Division II Champion Ashland Eagles women’s basketball team has been using Real Colors since 2010. It’s helped both players and coaches build stronger relationships that contributed to their on-court success.

Coquese Washington, head coach of the back-to-back Big Ten Champion Penn State Lady Lions, found Real Colors so helpful that she hired me to join her staff! We use the assessment with key recruits and refer to “colors” often in our daily conversation. It’s been an important ingredient in helping our players understand one another.

While this tool has been a huge asset to my business, along the way, it’s helped me develop a deeper understanding of human behavior that has positively impacted my own personal and professional relationships—which makes me even more grateful to share it with others.


About Stephanie Zonars:

After leading domestic and international basketball tours with Athletes in Action for eighteen years, Stephanie Zonars founded Life Beyond Sport, LLC to offer personal coaching and creative team building workshops to sports coaches and teams. She’s facilitated workshops for over 100 sports teams, helping them develop stronger trust and communication. In addition to maintaining her business, Stephanie serves full-time with Penn State women’s basketball in areas of leader development and community outreach. She is also the author of three books.

You can connect with Stephanie via www.LifeBeyondSport.com.

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Notre Dame Hall of Fame
Coach, Muffet McGraw