



Coach Donnie Campbell

If the word “believe” resonates with you, it means that you are probably a diehard fan of the hit series Ted Lasso, which portrays a football coach from Kansas who is hired to be the head coach of the English Premier Soccer Leagues AFC Richmond. But did you know that there was a real inspiration behind this award-winning show?

Coach Donnie Campbell is a math teacher and a high school basketball coach from Kansas who was plucked out of obscurity when Jason Sudeikis, the American actor and star of the 5-time Emmy Award winning show, revealed to Stephen Colbert on the late show that Campbell was in part the impetus for the lead character he plays with such wit and wisdom. It was back in the late 1990’s when Jason played basketball at Shawnee Mission West and Donnie was his coach. Little did Campbell know that all of the pearls of wisdom he was dropping on Jason and the team would appear years later and make an indelible impression on millions around the world.

Today, Campbell has been busy making appearances on local and national television including ABC’s Good Morning America and NBC’s The Today Show. In addition to teaching, he is now speaking to organizations and companies about leadership and specifically, how important it is to instill strong values in the people you work with. He credits his leadership skills to his always positive attitude and to his mentors that prepared him for success both in the classroom and as a coach.

Campbell graduated from Lyons high school in 1980 and attended Kansas State University on a football scholarship and played basketball his freshman year. For the past 36 years, he has coached and taught math, but more importantly he has been building the confidence and character of the young men and women who have played for him.