

K-State flourishing behind Snyder's 16 goals

By JOHN MARSHALL (AP College Football Writer) | The Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) -- During his time as the retired coach of the Kansas State Wildcats, Bill Snyder conceptualized a plan for success in football and life.

When he was again the football coach of the Kansas State Wildcats, Snyder returned with his philosophy firmed up into a thesis of sorts, calling it "16 Goals for Success."

Commitment. Unselfishness. Toughness. Enthusiasm. Leadership. Responsibility.

Snyder's 16 goals aren't much different than what football coaches across the country have preached, in one form or another, since the game started. It's just that he organized them into a manifesto along the lines of UCLA coach John Wooden's Leadership Pyramid.

"It's been a process over a long period of time," Snyder said. "Really, if you were to look at them, you would see they're intrinsic values that you would teach your children and everybody in this room would teach their children. It's common sense more than anything else."

Snyder's 16 goals are at the core of Kansas State's success, the driving force behind the seventh-ranked Wildcats' run to one of the most anticipated bowl games this season, against No. 5 Oregon in the Fiesta Bowl on Thursday night at University of Phoenix Stadium.

Snyder's plan also is an apt way to describe the coach who followed the Manhattan Miracle with a second program resurrection, a 73-year-old who can still connect with players young enough to be his grandchildren, a man who has shaped the lives of so many.

Goal No. 4: Improve. Snyder orchestrated one of the greatest turnarounds in college football history, turning a program widely considered the worst in the country into a national-title contender, an about-face known as the Manhattan Miracle.

Before Snyder took over as coach in 1989, the Wildcats had not won a game the previous two seasons and had gone winless eight times since 1946.

Kansas State won its first bowl in the program's history in Snyder's fifth season and was a top-10 team two years later. The Wildcats went to 11 straight bowl games from 1993-03 under Snyder and were essentially a fumble away from playing for a national championship in 1999, when they finished 11-1.

Kansas State won 135 games in Snyder's 17 seasons before he retired in 2005.

When the Wildcats again fell on hard times, he came back and did it again.

"He'll go down in history as one of the greatest college football coaches this game has ever seen," Oregon coach Chip Kelly said. "He is a model for how to run your program."

K-State flourishing behind Snyder's 16 goals

No. 6: Self-discipline. Every football coach is detail-oriented. Few do it like Snyder.

The stories about Snyder's attention to detail are legendary, from the time he reportedly went ballistic about the type of butter served to his players during a meal to allegedly complaining about his team having to sit on the sunny side of a plane during a road trip.

As another yarn goes, Snyder once tried to have himself hypnotized so he could cut his sleep to a one-hour trance. He was told it doesn't work that way.

Believe those or not, Snyder is most certainly a stickler for the little things.

This is a coach who doesn't just script plays and practices, he does it with staff meetings and has his assistants do the same with their position meetings.

He's been known to eat one meal a day - at the very end - and sleep three to four hours a night.

Kansas State's schemes aren't fancy or overly complicated, but they are predicated on players knowing and fulfilling their assignments.

Same thing off the field. The players are required to go to class, stay out of trouble, be prepared for games.

Details are everything under Snyder.

"I felt like I was a disciplined guy coming in, definitely feel like I was very well-mannered," Kansas State senior defensive back Nigel Malone said. "But it's a different animal up here. I tell you, it's different."

No. 10: Never give up. When Snyder came out of retirement in 2008 to become Kansas State's coach again, the move was met with skepticism.

He was 69, had gone 9-13 the final two seasons of his previous stint in the Little Apple and had been out of the game for three years.

The concerns were that the game had passed him by, that he wouldn't be able to relate to recruits or adjust to changes in the Big 12, which became spread-crazy in the short time he had been gone.

Snyder also was inheriting a team that wasn't exactly in the best of shape after three years under coach Ron Prince, the culture of losing permeating the team again and the roster thin on talent.

Snyder never let any of that bother him. He dug back in, stuck to his proven method, made tweaks where he needed to.

Kansas State won six games the first season after his return.

The Wildcats won seven the next season and went to the Pinstripe Bowl.

Last season, 10 wins and the Cotton Bowl.

K-State flourishing behind Snyder's 16 goals

This season, the Wildcats were front-runners for a national title before losing to Baylor on Nov. 17 and are a victory away from the first 12-win season in school history.

"I think this season has been particularly gratifying for him," said Del Miller, Kansas State's quarterbacks coach and co-offensive coordinator. "It's such a special group of young people we're working with right now. They have done a tremendous job of buying into the Bill Snyder way. It's certainly a proven way of winning."

No. 16: Responsibility. Snyder's name is on the stadium at Kansas State. Same thing with the highway that leads into Manhattan off Interstate 70.

That alone could have been enough to lure the old coach back after the program regressed during his retirement.

But Kansas State football is bigger than one man - even one whose name is on the stadium.

To the east, Kansans have the University of Kansas to root for.

Out west, there's nothing but plains and small towns, the next major college in Boulder, Colo., more than seven hours from Manhattan.

Kansas State is not only a team for a small college town, it is, in a sense, a team for most of a state.

Fans come from all over to watch the Wildcats and Snyder understands the relationship, tells his players that they owe their best effort to the hard-working people who come and spend their money to watch them play.

That's part of the reason he harps on the details, on doing things right.

Responsibility is not just the last of Snyder's 16 goals.

It's the cornerstone.

"It represents those things that you would want young people to be responsive to, which we believe helps provide opportunities for success in all facets of their life," Snyder said. "Certainly, if that's true, it would help create success on the football field, as well."

The rest of Snyder's 16 Goals: Commitment, Unselfishness, Unity, Be tough, Great effort, Enthusiasm, Eliminate mistakes, Don't accept losing, No self-limitations, Expect to win, Consistency, Leadership.

They are the basis for Snyder's philosophy in football and life - and the way he lives his.

K-State flourishing behind Snyder's 16 goals

- 1. Commitment**
- 2. Unselfishness**
- 3. Unity**
- 4. Improve**
- 5. Be Tough**
- 6. Self-discipline**
- 7. Great effort**
- 8. Enthusiasm**
- 9. Eliminate Mistakes**
- 10. Never Give Up**
- 11. Don't Accept Losing**
- 12. No Self-Limitations**
- 13. Expect to Win**
- 14. Consistency**
- 15. Leadership**
- 16. Responsibility**