

David Caporaletti '83

Director of Operations

Years ago, David Caporaletti '83 could have never imagined that his days as a 7th grade basketball player at Benchmark were preparing him for life in the Big Ten. But today, as Director of Operations for the Penn State Men's Basketball team, Dave (or "Cappy" as his friends call him) finds himself living that life and frequently referring to life lessons he learned at Benchmark.

One such lesson is about attitude—the word that hangs prominently on the wall of the Penn State team's private locker room—and the foundation of the program run by Head Coach Pat Chambers. "Coach believes that attitude is the only thing you can control," Dave explained. "So you decide when you wake up in the morning if you're going to be happy or sad, if you're going to work hard or you're not going to work hard. We try to instill in our players to always keep a good attitude whatever the situation."

Luckily, having a good attitude comes pretty naturally for Dave. He entered Benchmark as a fifth grader in 1979, at the recommendation of his reading tutor. Though he wasn't immediately convinced that he needed to attend the school, his tutor took the time to carefully explain how his reading comprehension level was different from other students in his grade. He said he remembers that day "like it was yesterday" and, from that day on, he accepted Benchmark as his school.

"Benchmark was fun for me and I loved going there," he said. "In fact,

Benchmark helped make me the man I am today. I learned hard work and how to compete. Nothing was ever handed to me in my time there. [Additionally], the teachers instilled in me that it's about knowing what's on the piece of paper, not worrying about what other people think of me. They helped me understand that it's okay to be the way that I am. This is who I am."

Besides gaining confidence in academics, Dave—who has always loved sports—also gravitated towards athletics at Benchmark. Not surprisingly, Wayne Reichart was the Benchmark faculty member who had the biggest impact on the impressionable young student. "[Wayne] taught me how to work hard, how to compete, and to just try to be a good person," he said.


After leaving Benchmark, Dave entered 8th grade at E.T. Richardson Middle School and then went on to Springfield High School. He earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from Philadelphia University, which is where he would meet his friend (and future boss) Pat Chambers. Following graduation, he first worked for former Villanova coach Rollie Massimino, then as an assistant to Philadelphia University coach Herb Magee. During that time, he also started his own painting business. After that, Dave moved north in order to join the coaching staff of his friend Pat Chambers at Boston University. After two successful seasons there, Dave followed Coach Chambers to State



College when Chambers was named the Nittany Lions' head basketball coach.

Today, from his office in the Bryce Jordan Center, Dave handles a wide variety of the team's logistics including scheduling practices, assisting with student housing, working with the academic advisor to meet the needs of the student athletes, handling the Nike clothing allotment, running summer sports camps, assisting with Coach Chambers' schedule, organizing player appearances, and coordinating special events. It's a long list of responsibilities, but a joy for Dave. "I love my job," he said. "I don't even consider it a job. It's my passion and what I was meant to do."

Now totally enveloped in the Penn State community, Dave is starting to bleed blue and white. He and his wife Amanda—a UConn grad and a big sports fan herself—met on campus when she was studying for her doctorate. They married in May 2015 and are expecting their first child in November—hopefully not on the night Penn State plays perennial powerhouse Duke as part of the NCAA Tip-Off Tournament. "If you don't see me in the first seat, you'll know something is happening," he joked.

His advice to current students is to "enjoy your experience and be confident with who you are and don't worry about what other people think. What matters is what you think and the people who care about you. I tell players all the time—just be who you are. That's good enough." 

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