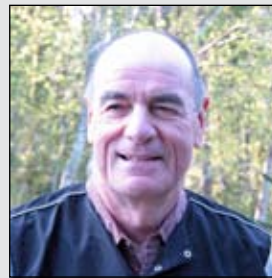


JIM SEREDICK

BC SCHOOL SPORTS COACH OF THE MONTH MAY 2009

School: Alberni District, *Port Alberni*.
Years Coaching: 40.
Currently Coaching: Basketball and baseball.
Also coached: Volleyball.
Subjects: English.



Why did you decide to coach?

I believe very strongly in extra-curricular activities. Education is far more than the classroom and I think the relationships you build up with the kids outside the class are perhaps more memorable than the relationships you do get in the class. Inside the classroom it tends to be somewhat limited, whereas the level of involvement you have with the sport and the student, you see a lot of progress from the beginning to the end of the year. The other aspect is as a classroom teacher. I don't know how I could have survived without coaching. The year itself is too long, if all you do is teach, in my case English, I'd be so burned out. Coaching is a welcome break; it's a different venue, a different interaction with students.

What's the most rewarding thing about being a teacher-coach?

Involvement with kids. The relationships that you build up with the kids that you've coached decades ago who come back and say hello, they always refer to you as 'coach'. Some of the kids that I coached, I've coached their sons and daughters and I think that's pretty neat. I think it's about relationships. It's not about winning and losing, I learned a long time ago winning is truly measured in many ways and it certainly is not just measured in wins and losses.

Who would you identify as a role model specific to coaching?

Well certainly as far as basketball is concerned I learned a lot from Jim Mayo. He was very knowledgeable about the game. I think Brian LaViolette has certainly been a role model. He has been very involved, extremely involved, very caring about young people and Doug Stoutley would be another role model. He was a former coach and P.E. teacher for many years. He was certainly very supportive when I first got in coaching. I think those three people as far as the high school level is concerned.

How did you find sport in your life?

I've been involved as a player I guess, at the baseball level anyways since I was eight years old. So that takes in about 50 plus years now. I just followed the footsteps of my big brother. He was an athlete and I just followed him.

What is the biggest challenge you face as a teacher-coach?

I guess now it's getting kids to fully commit to a sport. Let's just say player commitment. By that I mean boys tend to be more committed to sport if they say I'm going to play basketball or soccer. Girls who I've spent half my coaching career working, tremendous experiences with them, immense successes, but I've found that lately there doesn't seem to be the commitment.

But we're dealing with some society changes, it's nobody's fault it's just the way it is, you don't see the commitment you did 15 or 20 years ago. They think nothing these days of not coming to practice. If we're putting in time then let's try to maximize that. Because once we lose that it's gone, we can't go to Safeway to buy it. Let's be as good as we can be.

What has coaching taught you about life?

I think that coaching and life are intertwined. You have to adapt to be successful. There's no absolute. I think you have to adapt, you deal with the hand you're dealt with. I think you have to learn how to be flexible. Despite the fact you have some preconceived ideas of what you want to do along the way there could be an injury to a star player, a kid could come up to you half way through the season and say they don't want to play anymore, parents could come and interfere and so forth. You get these shocks in the dark. You have to be flexible.

Describe your first coaching experience

It was grade eight girls' junior basketball and my point guard played the entire season in bare feet. Her nickname was Spider, she now drives a bus for the school district and I still call her Spider.

What was one of your proudest moments as a teacher-coach?

I think the first team that I took to a BC Provincial was my senior girls' team back in '81-'82. We finished third on Vancouver Island, we then went to Penticton and finished fourth at the Provincials. It was pretty thrilling to make the Provincials.

The other thing which I take pride in is the fact the City of Port Alberni named three baseball fields "Seredick Place" to commemorate the time, effort, and dedication my wife and I have given to Alberni Jr. Baseball over the past 35 years.

What do you do in your spare time?

I like to go fishing, pick mushrooms. Hiking, lots of trail walking. I also coach baseball in my spare time.

What do you believe would resonate with the teacher-coach of today in terms of recognition?

I think if you're not going to compensate them, and it looks like we live in a society where we're not going to get much compensation, I think time off would be good. I really believe that because of the amount of time coaches put in, whether they are basketball or anything, obviously that's a lot of free time that they are investing or donating. I think that at some juncture throughout the year the school district could say this translates to time off. I think it's workable, doable and they are not going to go out and buy you a case of whiskey. So this would be good.

What's the most rewarding thing about being a teacher-coach?

Again, it's the relationships and seeing kids develop. They start out at A and you can take them all the way from A to J. You can watch them grow physically and enhance their skill development.

I coached some kids when they were in grade 10 who are now on the Canadian national team and I like to think I had a little hand in that. I spent a considerable amount of time with them and that's rewarding. There are successes and disappointments and stuff like that. Some kids again are part of our team on scholarships down in the States and are doing very well. It's nice to see them have success for all the hard work they did.