

Rod Morrison

BC SCHOOL SPORTS COACH OF THE MONTH MARCH 2009

School: Nakusp.

Years coaching: About 25 years.

Currently coaching: Senior boys' and girls' soccer.

Also coached: Volleyball, curling, golf, elementary sports, track and field, and softball.

Subjects: P.E. and athletic director.



Why did you decide to coach?

Probably because I had played sports my whole life and saw the value in working with students outside the classroom settings and saw the importance of sports to kids.

What are the challenges of being a teacher-coach in Nakusp?

I think the main one is the time that it consumes pretty much every game we play, every tournament is a major distance to travel so there's a huge time commitment. There are also issues with the budget because it's so expensive to travel now and we're in quite a small school so basically you have the same kids doing everything. It's tough to get a group of kids to do a particular sport or activity.

What are some of the rewards of being a teacher-coach in your area?

I think probably the main reward is seeing the growth in self-confidence in the student athletes as they go out and compete against other teams. When you are in a small town you quite often get the message that you're not as good as someone from the bigger cities and stuff and we've had teams over the years that have been very competitive. We've won a couple of Provincial Championships. I've taken teams to various Provincials 25 to 30 times over the years. Between golf, curling, and boys' and girls' soccer. There's been years we've gone to three provincial tournaments. It's important for kids to understand that they do have a chance.

We've had three groups that really come to mind over the years. In one year one team won the silver medal in the BC Winter Games, they came second in BC Junior Ladies' Curling and came second in BC High School Provincials. It's unbelievable. Just a very good group of athletes and very focused. We also have a great golf team. We've got a school with a tiny nine hole course and

they beat 21 other teams in the Kootenays and we were the number one seed and their score was under par in the Kootenay finals.

I think that we're the only BC Kootenay team that's won the Boys' Soccer Provincial.

Who would you identify as a role model or mentor in your life specific to coaching?

Not sure I had one. The guy who was here before me, Charlie Granewall, he really wasn't a coaching mentor, he is still a good friend. He's certainly had some very helpful words of advice over the year. The other two would be my two older brothers who were teachers, administrators and coached kids over the years.

What do you do in your spare time?

Because of all of the travel, the school years are very hectic. With the summer we are very fortunate to live on a very beautiful lake. We spend a lot of family time doing various things and relaxing. I have curled and golfed for a number of years and still do that.

I have a wife and a seven year old daughter who just started skating, ski racing and will hopefully try other stuff this year. Between her and our Dalmatian puppy we've got our hands full.

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

Basically I think the main thing is support and when I say support I mean administration whether it's an athletic director, vice principal or principal to make sure the coach just has to coach. And what I mean by that, as you're well aware there are registration forms, uniforms, budget, travel schedules, permission slips and all of that stuff. If it is done by the administrator or athletic director that leaves the coach the room to do what they want to do, which is coach so it makes life so much easier. When I'm not coaching a team that's what I try to do so they do practice and the games.

What has coaching taught you about life?

I guess the main thing is walk the walk and talk the talk. Sports really straightens that out really quick, you can tell the guys who know what they are doing have knowledge and play the sports because they don't brag about the results and all the stuff they have done, they just go out and their teams compete. The people who do all the talking are quite often the ones who can't back it up.

The world isn't going to spin off its axis if you didn't win a high school game.

Coaching credentials.

Level one certification in several sports: rugby curling and soccer.

What was your proudest moment as a teacher-coach?

The kids ask me that all the time. I've been here so long and they always ask me what the best team was, all three of them were exceptional teams. Because they were so different and in different sports it is like comparing apples and oranges.