

VAL GIBSON

BC SCHOOL SPORTS COACH OF THE MONTH MAY 2009

School: L.V. Rogers, *Nelson*.

Years Coaching: 24.

Currently Coaching: Tennis.

Also coached: Basketball and field hockey.

Subjects: Science 9 and PE 9 and 10.



Why did you decide to coach?

The main impetus was a coach I had in high school the relationships and opportunities I got from her made me want to give that back. Her name is Allison Clinton.

What has been the most rewarding thing about being a teacher-coach?

Actually, this year is interesting because I got traded to high school. I coached girls this year in grade 12 who I had coached in grade eight at middle school. The most rewarding thing is to see kids develop and grow up into young adults who can handle things on their own, to witness that maturity and development.

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

Lorne Murray is a coach at Trafalgar who I worked with for 20 years and taught me a lot about basketball, the game and how to deal with kids and parents. And then one of my other role models who is huge is Cheryl Closkey. She has been a dynamite coach in the Kootenays for many decades. When I was a young coach she gave me a lot of help and inspiration.

What do you do during your spare time?

In my spare time I spend a lot of time with my huge giant Malamute dog and we ski together, he has a harness and I have a harness and we ski across a cross country trail and he pulls me. That's a fun winter thing and I'm a gardener in the summer.

Describe how you found sport in your life?

I was just always a jock. I was a little tomboy. Playing catch in my backyard and playing street hockey in Montreal where I grew up.

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

I think probably what most teacher-coaches need is time. From our own schools teachers need to be paid in time and given time off to do what we need to do. But from BC School Sports recognition from your peers is wonderful. We get recognition from our kids all the time, but when we get it from other coaches it's great because they know where you come from and what you put up with.

What is the biggest challenge you face as a teacher-coach and what steps have you taken to overcome them?

The biggest challenges are probably kids having commitments and trying to split their time between work and school and splitting their time. What I do is get teachers on board and excuse kids from what they can so they have time to get organized. When we're out on tournaments we always have a steady morning where kids can work. I always give schedules out in advance so kids can plan work around their practice times. The second problem is money, if I can't let them work they can't make money. A season can cost a player \$700 to \$800.

What has coaching taught you about life?

The biggest thing it's taught me about life is to be organized. If I plan a great practice and I write it down on paper it becomes a great practice. The second thing is that you get out more than what you put in. I might have low energy one day but after I walk out of practice I have more energy and feel great.

Describe your first coaching experience?

My first, and this is the true story, was in Israel on a kibbutz and I was coaching a girls' basketball team. We had a great gym but they all came in bare feet and we played in our bare feet.

What was your proudest moment?

My proudest moment came this year because I was coaching girls in grade eight and now I have them in grade 12 and we were in the West Kootenay finals and we beat a team from trail that had beat us seven times and on the eighth game in the Kootenay finals we beat them. My team had six players because they were sick and injured. We were all crying and screaming at the end. It was such a great culmination for the grade 12s because we'd been together since grade eight.