

Mary Bartucci, Sa-Hali Secondary

Coach

About Mary Bartucci:

Mary began her 20 year coaching career as the volleyball coach at her old elementary school when she was in grade 12. “I always wanted to be a teacher, so coaching came naturally. It was a lot of fun.” She currently coaches senior boys and girls soccer at Sa-Hali Secondary in Kamloops, BC.

Most Rewarding Experience as a Coach:

“Winning provincials this year with AA boys soccer. Any time a team from the interior can do well in soccer, it's a big thing. We don't think anyone in Kamloops has ever won the soccer provincial before. In 1998 our school turned into a senior school so this is our first provincial championship.”



What Coaching has Brought to Her Life:

“I grew up a happy kid and had a great high school experience. I think every kid deserves the same. I want to see kids leave high school with good memories and relationships. There's nothing like sitting down with your buddies 10 years later and talking about a championship. I want to help them make memories.”



Biggest Challenges:

“Every year there is less and less money for extracurricular activities. You hate to see a kid not being able to do things because of money. Kids today have much more going on – community soccer, basketball, volleyball. When I was growing up there was just one sport per season. Now kids are multisport athletes. So trying to help kids organize themselves and still be competitive is a challenge.”

Proudest Moment in Coaching:

“To see how the soccer program has progressed in the last 12 years. When we won the provincial championships, it was a community win. We shared it. We got hundreds of messages within hours. The boys were excited in the moment, but very humble afterward.”

Teaching vs. Coaching:

“One of the things I love about coaching is that you get to know players as people, and you form special relationships. I have players come back 12 years later and have coffee with me. You build those relationships in teaching as well, just not as often.”