

A photograph of Wendy Hebbourn, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a green t-shirt and orange pants, kneeling in a garden. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The garden has several plants and a wooden trellis structure in the background.

Wendy Hebbourn

BC SCHOOL SPORTS COACH OF THE MONTH JUNE 2009

School: Argyle Secondary.

Years coaching: Ten years.

Currently coaching: Mountain biking.

Also coached: Swimming, gymnastics, and yoga..

Subjects: English and drama.

Why did you decide to coach?

The same reason I started teaching. I really like working with kids, it's the best connection. Getting kids on bikes is huge. It's such an avenue to learn about themselves and the world. I've ridden my bike through t 12 countries and it's such a wonderful thing.

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

Watching the kids grow in their skills and become a team. The thing about mountain biking is that each rider is their own person, they don't work together as a team but they bond together as a team, they encourage each other and are really excited to help each other get better.

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

My husband, Rick Loader. He's an amazing coach. He coaches for Endless Biking.

How did you find sport in your life?

I injured my knee running and I had to stop running so I got into biking and that took over my life.

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

Finding venues and finding a safe place to set up courses. I run the actual high school league, I coordinate 17 leagues from Squamish to the Sunshine Coast and and I have to locate good venues that are safe to ride on. I have to make that 200 kids riding on that isn't going to cause a huge environmental impact, that's a huge problem on the North Shore.

What has coaching taught you about life?

To keep persevering. If somebody says 'no' you find out why and how to get around it and how to meet people half way. It's huge.

Describe your first coaching experience

My first ever coaching experience was in swimming. I worked with kids who had spinal bifida and severe handicaps. When you put a child in water and their supported there is so much joy, to get them out of the wheelchair and into the water. That's what did it for me, I started that when I was 13 years old and I continue with coaching because it's the joy of personal growth and that freedom to struggle against the odds, it's very addictive.

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

I think it was getting an all girls line going this year. I think some girls are intimidated about riding with 20 to 30 guys, so now I have a team of girls who can meet after school, hang out, bond and ride. And it's not really competitive, but it is, there is room for the kids who are super competitive, but there is also a chance to enjoy being outside, and there are not really many sports like that. In mountain biking any kid can go to Provincials.

What do you do in your spare time?

I don't have any. I have an elderly lab named Duke and he comes with me to the races and all the kids love him.

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

Our races were sponsored by JJ Beans so I gave everyone a pound of coffee as a token of thanks.

Kona bike did a huge sponsorship too, I got volunteers water bottles, making a statement of how much it's appreciated and making a small gesture in that way. I think we could really recognize people by trying to take the workload off as much as possible. I think in today's teaching climate it's becoming harder and harder to be a teaching coach because there is no time.

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

It's always the interactions with kids. It's in a non classroom way and you get to see who they really are. It's a really neat connection, and teaching would be hard if I didn't have that connection with them.