

## Coaches-What are you Doing for Yourself

So, I started coaching at 22 straight out of grad school when I was hired to coach basketball at St Louis CC/ Meramec in the Fall of 1973. I received a whopping \$500 but being a South STL City kid, I thought that was great. Young and dumb but we didn't have a lot in those days. That turned in teaching PE part-time but the next Fall, I got the full time PE position and the AD let me start Field Hockey and Softball at Meramec. I was young, energetic and loved it.

I stayed in shape just by teaching and doing the same activities as my classes. In practices with no assistants, I hit hundreds of balls to the infield and again to the outfield. I even pitch to hitters as good as I could not being a pitcher. But loved every minute of that also and it was a great way to stay in shape.

I retired after 30 years there at 53 and just turned 73. The activity and especially hitting infield and outfield so much to the players certainly took a toll on certain parts of the body. New knees and reconstructed thumbs to name a few. But wouldn't have changed a thing and I bet most coaches would say the same thing.

Which brings us to what are you doing now for yourselves? I highly recommend staying active after you finish coaching. I still have a walking program, hike when I can and wherever I can, weights were never a natural thing for me because I stayed in shape hitting balls to the teams and, also, doing all my own work at home. I played clarinet in high school and first year at college but had to quit after that I played three sports in college and those practice times conflicted with the band times. It not just physical health but mental health also.

I still do most of my own work at home being a little more selective. I do the things I really like to do and leaving the things I don't like to do to others. But I get a lot of exercise and strength training and I walk a lot and try to go places to hike. The best thing I did was go back to playing my clarinet and picked up playing a bass clarinet. We have a small church band of 10 musicians. We rarely play church music except if we play for church, but we do play once a week most of the year at Care Centers/Nursing Homes in St Louis and surrounding IL towns. We play lots of the older songs they would now along with song from movies, TV shows, patriotic tunes, etc. The Director is great about doing little skits with some of the residents while we play a song and then we had out tamborines, shakers, etc so then can play along. It is a blast for us and the residents. The smiles, the laughter are all worth it.

The point is that if you do not use it, you will lose it-muscles and the brain. Watch a baseball or football game sometime and focus on the players who are in tremendously good shape and then focus on the coaching staff especially the ones over 50. They all played in their Youth, too, and were in great shape. But as we age, we naturally retire, our metabolism slows down and we lose what we had. That leads to weight gain which makes everything harder and in some cases, life shorter. So, find something you like to do to be active. Walking in the park, hiking in the woods, any sport, weight training or physical work, biking, pickleball, isometrics, chair yoga, etc. Anything to put so stress on your body and build some muscle back. Play an instrument again if you did in your Youth. I hadn't play for 30 years and one of our sax players hadn't played for 50 years. And not bragging but we are pretty darn good. We just got back from Colorado playing at a church and care centers. It does come back to you.

We were all into molding the younger generations into better players and people. Teaching, coaching and making them not just better players but maybe even teaching them to be better adults. Making them hopefully to be better parents, teachers, workers, humans. We could all use some more of that right now.

Someday coaching will be over, prepare for that next chapter in your life and take the time you need for yourself.