

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

COACHES AND MILESTONES

There is no other job that compares to a high school coach. The opportunity to work with young people in the unique and special environment that education-based athletics is, takes a certain mind set and skill set, along with a fundamental responsibility to always put student-athletes first in the conduct of our programs. I have been fortunate to have worked with and observed thousands of coaches, who may have taken different approaches to how they go about their business, but share a commonality related to the value and importance of the work that they do in service to others.



There are those who believe that coaching high school student-athletes has not changed much over the years and it is the same now as it has been in the past. There are others who would say that coaching at the high school level has never been more challenging than it is today. Regardless of your position on that issue, there is one thing that remains constant.

Coaches who do this for a long time have a dedication and commitment that carries through all that is happening around them. With what coaching involves these days, especially over the past couple of years when our resolve has been tested like it never has before, I wanted to recognize some outstanding individuals who have achieved notable milestones in their journeys as high school coaches by persevering in the face of the obstacles placed in front of them. They serve as examples that all of us can be proud of and represent true excellence in the coaching profession. The following coaches, in just the last few months, have achieved the numbers of career wins listed below...

- 1,200 – Gary McKnight – Boys Basketball, Mater Dei High School
- 1,000 – Mike Le Duc – Boys Basketball, Damien/Glendora High Schools
- 1,000 – Keith Nighswonger – Water Polo, Sunny Hills High School
- 900 – Harvey Kitani – Boys Basketball, Rolling Hills Prep/Fairfax High Schools
- 800 – Melissa Hearlihy – Girls Basketball, Harvard-Westlake High School
- 600 – Carl Buggs – Girls Basketball, Long Beach Poly High School
- 600 – Jeff Gordon – Girls Soccer, Sunny Hills High School
- 600 – Cindy Gurney – Girls Volleyball, Alta Loma High School
- 600 – Lorene Morgan – Girls Basketball, Millikan High School
- 500 – Jerry De Fabiis – Boys Basketball, Colony High School
- 500 – Steve Miklos – Softball, Orange Lutheran High School
- 500 – Jon Palarz – Boys Basketball, Calabasas High School
- 500 – Richard Yoon – Girls Basketball, Rosary High School
- 400 – Nate Harrison – Boys Basketball, Canyon/Anaheim High School
- 300 – Ernest Baskerville – Boys Basketball, So. Pasadena High School
- 300 – Tony Davis – Boys Basketball, Mayfair High School
- 300 – Martin Woods – Girls Basketball, Centennial/Corona High School
- 200 – Nick Masi – Girls Basketball, Covina High School



When you look at 200 career wins, which translates to an average of 20 wins a season for 10 years, you realize that is a significant accomplishment. Now, examining this list and realizing that averaging 20 wins a season for 20 years, 30 years, 40 years, etc., is incredible. These are certainly impressive numbers and exemplify what it means to be a leader in education-based athletics. I look forward to seeing these numbers continue to increase for those on this list in the time ahead, as well as welcoming other excellent coaches from throughout our section who will be motivated and inspired to reach these milestones as well.

All the best,
Rob Wignel