

Ed Faulkner



In an athletic program that has come to define excellence for nearly a half-century, Ed Faulkner can proudly take his place among the top coaches in the history of Brien McMahon High School.

In fact, Faulkner's 609 career victories in two sports ranks second in school history behind only Ralph King, the Senators' Hall of Fame coach who won 713 games in boys soccer and basketball.

Faulkner has been coaching at BMHS for 30 years, beginning with the girls basketball program in 1978-79. He took over a team that had won only two games the previous season, went 0-17 the year before that, and posted just one victory in 1976 – a combined 3-46 mark.

But Faulkner, coaching girls for the first time after spending the previous seven years with boys basketball teams in Bridgeport, guided the Lady Senators to a 3-14 record, equaling the total win output of their past three seasons. His second year they won seven games, and by his third season, 1980-81, they improved to 15-7 for McMahon's first winning record in eight years.

The Senators also qualified for the FCIAC and state tournaments for the first time ever that season, reaching the conference semifinals while posting their first state tourney win in history, a 61-44 victory over Southington.

That would be the first of five straight state-tournament appearances by McMahon under Faulkner, who led the Senators to another 15-7 finish in 1984 and their first West Division championship.

After a one-year hiatus, Faulkner and McMahon returned to postseason play the next four years, including a 20-4 record in 1987-88. The 20 wins was a school record

while the Senators reached the state semifinals for the first time in program history as well as the FCIAC semis for only the second time.

They would win a second division title and return to the league semifinals in 1992, while in 1993 they not only went back to the semis but in the state tournament, seeded 10th, reeled off four straight wins to reach the Class L state final, where they lost to No. 1 Sacred Heart Academy.

The following year, led by Rita Williams, the Senators won a record 23 games, captured the East Division title, and advanced to the FCIAC final for the first time, losing to Bridgeport Central. But McMahon would return to the Class L final and this time knocked off Sacred Heart Academy 69-57 to win the 1994 state championship, the crowning achievement in Faulkner's outstanding coaching career.

But his success on the hardwood was far from over. Faulkner would lead McMahon back to the state tournament 10 of the next 11 years, reaching the Class L finals again in 2001 and the state semis the next three years after that.

The Senators would win 20 or more games in each of those four seasons, returning to the FCIAC finals in 2001, '03 and '04. Faulkner's 2003 team finished 17-0 in the FCIAC and a perfect 19-0 during the regular season, then won its first FCIAC championship with a thrilling 57-54 win over defending champ Trinity Catholic. McMahon was 24-0 – another school record for wins – before falling to eventual state champion Guilford in the semifinals.

Then in 2004, the Senators went 17-0 in the FCIAC again – stretching their regular-season conference winning streak to 41 over three seasons – and defeated Trumbull 61-57 to capture a second consecutive FCIAC championship. They would lose in the state semifinals again to finish 23-3.

The 2007-08 season was Faulkner's 30th, during which time he has amassed 356 wins, made the FCIAC playoffs 14 times, the state tournament 23 times, won five division titles, a pair of FCIAC crowns and one state championship. Overall, he went to four FCIAC finals and three state finals.

For the past 27 years, Faulkner has also coached girls softball at McMahon, four as an assistant and the last 23 seasons as the Senators' head coach beginning in 1986. By 1988, in only his third season, he led McMahon to a 9-9 record and its first state tournament appearance. Two years later, in 1990, the Senators qualified for the FCIAC playoffs for the first time.

That would be the first of 12 FCIAC tournament appearances by McMahon under Faulkner, who also led the Senators to the state tourney 17 times in a 19-year span, reaching the Class L semifinals in 2005 when they won a record 18 games.

All told, Faulkner has won 253 games in softball, giving him 609 total victories in two sports at Brien McMahon.

Now in his 38th year of coaching, the 64-year-old Faulkner, began his career in Bridgeport, where he was born and played basketball, baseball and tennis at Bassick High School. He played the same three sports at Quinnipiac College before transferring and graduating from the University of Bridgeport.

Beginning in 1971-72, Faulkner served as an assistant basketball coach at Bullard Havens High School for two seasons, at Bridgeport Central for one year, and then three seasons at Bassick before becoming head coach at his alma mater during the 1977-78 season. In his only season there, Faulkner led the Lions to the state semifinals, and counting the 11 games he won that season, he has a total of 620 high school victories.

What's more, one of his players on that Bassick team was John Garris, who went on to play at Boston College and then in the NBA. Two decades later, another one of Faulkner's former players, Rita Williams, played in the WNBA, giving him the distinction of coaching high school players who made it to both the NBA and WNBA.

Faulkner was recognized by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association (CHSCA) as a coach of the year in both girls basketball (2000) and softball (2007), coached in the CHSCA all-star game in both sports, and was nominated for the National High School Coaches Association coach of the year award in girls basketball in 2006.

He was also named the Connecticut Post Coach of the Year in girls basketball in 2003, served as the FCIAC committee chairperson for over a decade in both softball and girls basketball, and in 2004 received the prestigious Bernie Iassogna Award from the Fairfield County Basketball Officials.

But he says the award he's most proud of are the three children – Lindsay, Jill and Brian, all former athletes at Trumbull High School – that he and his wife Wendy raised.