

SPORTS PROFILE:

TOM TARANTINO

Coach for Life

By Anita Palmer



Athletic Director Tom Tarantino works in a laboratory. A laboratory of life lessons, that is. At least that's how Tom, affectionately known as Coach T, describes the athletics program at The Bishop's School.

"What I love about athletics is that it's such fertile ground for learning. It's an extension of the classroom," says Tom, who oversees a coaching staff for 42 teams in 24 sports and is head coach for varsity boys' basketball.

"You're out there (on the field or in the gym) with a group of people, and you have to figure out a way to work together for a common cause—to use your resources for the good of all. It's a matter of everyone giving. And sometimes of sacrificing so that someone else can succeed. Those are life lessons."

According to Tom, a good coach goes beyond the scoreboard to frame the student athletes' experiences into a game plan for character building. That is exactly what Tom, a cheerful, energetic man with a lingering Long Island accent, has a reputation for doing.

"I often describe Tom as the very best basketball coach in America," says Headmaster Michael Teitelman. "He certainly understands game strategy and execution extraordinarily well. However, what impresses me the most is Tom's insistence on character-building and the value of the team. His reservoir of patience for each of his players is unending and unconditional. These are gifts that are rarely seen at any level of athletic competition."

Middle School history teacher at Bishop's, Kamal Assaf '88, has an interesting perspective as a colleague and also as head coach of the varsity boys' basketball team at La Jolla High School.

"Tom has great humility, but he is one of the most highly respected coaches in San Diego County," says Kamal, who counts Tom as a mentor.

The accolades make Tom feel a little funny.

"I'm honored, but you know, it's not a chore to come to work," he says with a grin. "When you're around young people, and they feel good about themselves, you get a lot back. The biggest charge is when someone comes in and says, 'Coach, can I speak with you?' That's like oxygen to the good teachers, to the good coaches. And isn't that what all of us want for our children...to be around people who love them and bring out the best in them?"

Senior Nick Lake, boys' varsity basketball team captain, who averaged 19 points per game and was an All San Diego CIF selection, says the coach has helped bring out his personal best.

"Coach T sets high standards for us but he's always encouraging. There have been times when I was down, but he told me to keep trying. He built up my confidence again. He's a great role model."

Tom has been a role model at Bishop's since 2000, four years after he and wife Patti moved from New York with their three daughters (Gabby '08, Brianna '11, and 10-year-old Jenna).



Tom and the 2001 varsity basketball team at the CIF semi-final upset victory over Horizon shortly after Tom arrived at Bishop's.

Under his leadership the athletics program and school spirit have flourished. Out of 530 Upper School students, 400 participate on a team. This winter, Bishop's was the only school in San Diego to have four teams (varsity girls' soccer, basketball, and water polo; and varsity boys' basketball) ranked in the top 10 by the *San Diego Union-Tribune*.

Yet even as the trophies stack up Tom emphasizes the basics.

"The scoreboard definition of success is wrong—not that we don't want to win! But we're more concerned with the process, with the students' self-esteem and how they grow as people."

Tom recalls some good coaches in his own life, starting with his father, Carmine Tarantino, and continuing with high school coach Bob McKillop at Holy Trinity in Long Island. Later, at Springfield College, Tom played basketball as a walk-on, a good player but not

great. That experience taught him to be sensitive to non-star players.

"A good coach doesn't make the players who don't make All-Star or All-American feel less. As a parent, I want a coach to see the potential in my child."

After college, Tom taught and coached at two high schools on Long Island, winning four league titles and twice being honored as "Coach of the Year."

Now at Bishop's, the best part of his day starts after two o'clock when he heads out of his office to cheer on the kids. He loves the campus at the end of the school day. "There's a neat energy on campus. It's like a mall at Christmastime: kids are all over the place, everyone is doing something. Athletics is a part of that."

Bishop's is a team Tom is happy to root for.

"It's such a worthwhile cause. We're educating the future leaders of our country. That's what gets me bouncing out of bed every morning," he says.

"Who could be more blessed, being around all these young people?"

The P-Team

The Perkins Family Takes to the Court with Centennial Campaign Gift

By Suzanne Weiner

There isn't much that the Perkins family does that it doesn't do together—whether it's time spent traveling, playing sports, or relaxing. Lori and Randy Perkins set the example for their children by involving themselves in every aspect of life at Bishop's, dating back to the early 1990s when daughter Corinine '97 arrived as a seventh-grader.

For Lori, this meant participation in a host of volunteer activities including her leadership as president of the Parents' Association in 2001-2002 and culminating with her current service role as a School Trustee.

"I so admire Lori's tireless dedication to Bishop's, especially her work on behalf of the Parents' Association and

the athletics program," said Headmaster Michael Teitelman. "Her commitment is legendary in my time at the School."

Passionate about their children, Lori and Randy engage themselves fully in whatever their kids are doing. At Bishop's, Corinine '97, Courtney '99, Robby '01, and Kyle '05, were all committed student athletes playing field hockey, basketball and volleyball. And Lori and Randy were their chief cheerleaders.

In gratitude for 15 years of dedication to the School and its athletics program, Lori and Randy's gift to the Centennial Campaign was recognized with the naming of the court in the Eva May Fleet Athletic Center as the **Lori Perkins**



Randy and Lori Perkins at the dinner announcing the Lori Perkins Family Court.

Family Court. This honor was kept a secret from Lori until the first of February when family and friends surprised her at a dinner celebration in Ellen Browning Scripps Hall followed by the dedication of the court's new name. Two video tributes were part of the evening's many special memories, as Lori's "fans" in the stands of the Eva May Fleet Athletic Center toasted her love for Bishop's and the P-Team.