

Dallas coach is a three-time Hall of Fame honoree

By SARAH HITE
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Mary Jo Hromchak wants to make something clear — she's not a Hall of Fame coach.

"There are lots of people who are better at this than I am," said the head coach of the Dallas High School girls basketball team.

But her days as an athlete have been cause for celebration. She was inducted in the Wilkes University Athletic Hall of Fame in 1994 and into the Luzerne County Sports Hall of Fame in 2003.

This Saturday she will complete what she calls the "trifecta" when the Wilkes-Barre resident receives the honor from her high school alma mater, E. L. Meyers High School.

"It came as a surprise," she said.

Hromchak, the former Mary Jo Frail, graduated from Meyers with 12 varsity letters — a first for a female athlete at the school. She played field hockey, softball and basketball for three years in high school and posed a challenge for herself

"My mother tried to give me a doll and I wanted a G.I. Joe," she said. "I think the only time she said no to me was when I wanted a full football uniform."

Mary Jo Hromchak
A self-proclaimed tomboy

just before graduation.

"I played volleyball in my senior year just to see if I could do it," she said.

The 52-year-old mother of two children (she and her husband, Mike, have two sons) and a self-proclaimed tomboy said basketball is the first sport she ever played as a young girl. Growing up with three brothers close to her age, she always tagged along for games and practices.

"There were no organized leagues for girls," she said. "They always said, 'Throw a hat on her and she could play.'"

Hromchak practiced constantly to keep up with her brothers, and sometimes went to the park alone just to get in some extra court time.

"In order to play with the boys, you had to get good," she said.

Her childhood kept her busy with rough-and-tumble sports like basketball and football, much to her mother's dismay.

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During high school, Hromchak joined every sports team she could, but not with intention to win awards. She said some of her fondest memories are being on a court or field and throwing a ball around.

"Once I hit organized sports, it was a brand new world to me," she said. "To know there were other girls like me — a whole team — I finally found it."

Her sports career continued at Wilkes University, where she studied psychology and secondary education while playing field hockey and basketball.

After her graduation in 1980, she maintained a job in the social services field while serving as assistant coach for the Wilkes women's basketball team. She stayed on as a Wilkes assistant coach in various sports for 22 years.

"I thought I was done after that," she said.

Not long after, she transitioned from college sports to high school athletics, signing on as an assistant coach for the Dallas High School girls basketball team. She is currently in her second year as head coach.

"I always say my two favorite things in life are having my own kids and coaching everyone else's kids," she said.

Hromchak hopes her passion for playing passes on to the athletes she coaches. While she still understands the importance of winning, she emphasizes the experience of the sport and having fun with the game to the Dallas girls.

"As a player and a young coach, I couldn't accept losing," she said. "In losing, you learn and in winning, you learn."



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Already a member of the Luzerne County Sports Hall of Fame and the Wilkes University Sports Hall of Fame, Dallas High School girls basketball coach Mary Jo Hromchak will be inducted into the Meyers High School Sports Hall of Fame on December 18.

DYB RESULTS

Ostroski leads RBO victory

3rd & 4th GRADE

RBO Consulting Lakers 20
Ziamba Insurance 76ers 15
Brett Ostroski had eight points for the winners while Justin Fell scored eight for Ziamba Insurance in the losing effort.

RBO Consulting Lakers 31
Gallis Insurance Knicks 17
Derek Answini led RBO with 17 markers while Michael Christman had two points for Gallis Insurance.

Fieldhouse Sporting Goods Magic 40

Bishop Photo Raptors 21
Michael Anderson exploded for 24 points to lead Fieldhouse while Alex Kapral had six points for Bishop Photo.

Diversified Payroll Solutions Spurs 26

Ziamba Insurance 76ers 16
Dylan Schuster pulled down 11 rebounds and chipped in three points for Diversified while Jake Shaver scored four points for Ziamba Insurance.

Eye Care Assoc. Bulls 29
George M. Dallas Lodge 12
Sean Boland led Eye Care Associates with six points while Ethan Sypniewski had five steals and four points for the Lodge.

Wyoming Valley Auto Sales Celtics 26

Dallas Rotary Cavaliers 16
Rusty Coolbaugh led Wyoming Valley with six points while Zach Strazdus dumped in six for Dallas Rotary.

STANDINGS

Lakers 3-0
Bulls 2-0
Magic 2-0
Spurs 2-0
Celtics 1-1
76ers 1-2
Cavs 0-1
Hornets 0-1
Knicks 0-2
Raptors 0-2
Suns 0-2

Registration is open

The Rock Recreation Center 340 Carverton Rd., Trucksville is accepting registrations for its eighth annual Upward Basketball League. Registration deadline is December 17 and the league runs January 3 through March 20.

For more information, call 696-2769 or e-mail TheRockRecCenter@bmha.org.

JENNIFER MERITHEW GETS FIRST BUCK



Jennifer Merithew, 14, a freshman at Dallas High School, harvested this 9-point buck in Susquehanna County while hunting with her dad and uncles. This is Merithew's first buck and was taken at 4 p.m. on opening day of deer season, using a .243 Winchester.

DALLAS MOUNTAINEER AQUATIC CLUB

DMAC drops two to Sea Lions

The Dallas Mountaineer Aquatic Club hosted the Wilkes-Barre CYC Sea Lions in the Northeast PA Age Group Swim League on December 4. The Sea Lions girls swam to a 134-112 victory and the boys took a 159-75 victory in the opening meet for both clubs.

The following Dallas swimmers placed in their events:

GIRLS

8 & UNDER
25 Free: Sydney Bittner, second
50 Free: Morgan Bennet, second
25 Back: Hannah Kline, third
25 Breast: Shreena Patel, first

10 & UNDER
100 IM: Abby Zolner, first; Heather Shively, third
50 Free: Annalise Cheshire, first; Ava Baur, third
50 Fly: Jordyn Miller, second
50 Back: Abby Zolner, first; Heather Shively, third
50 Breast: Jessica Ravert, first; Madison Federici, second
100 Free: Annalise Cheshire, first; Ava Baur, third

12 & UNDER
100 IM: Krista Vivian, first; Julia Baur, second
50 Free: Lauren Finnegan, first
50 Fly: Julia Baur, first; Madison Hurst, third
50 Back: Emily Bauer, second
50 Breast: Kathleen Brown, second
100 Free: Lauren Finnegan, first

14 & UNDER
200 IM: Kaylin Augustine, first; Sarah Fasulka, third
50 Free: Julianna Murray, third
100 Free: Kaylin Augustine, second
100 Fly: Amanda Schwertdman, second
200 Free: Lucy Reilly, second; Amanda Schwertdman, third
100 Back: Lucy Reilly, first
100 Breast: Sarah Fasulka, second

BOYS

8 & UNDER
50 Free: Tal Richards, third
25 Back: John Andrews, third
25 Breast: Dennis Dukinas, third

10 & UNDER
100 IM: Kyle Greenwood, third
50 Free: Donovan McCall, first; Louis Parente, second
50 Fly: Kyle Greenwood, second
50 Back: David Lipinski, second; Matthew Duffy, third
100 Free: Donovan McCall, first; Evan Sabecky, second
50 Breast: Donovan McCall, first; David Lipinski, third

12 & UNDER
100 IM: Porter Luksic, second
50 Free: Thomas Manzoni, third
50 Fly: Justin Butsvage, third
100 Free: Thomas Manzoni, third
50 Back: Tyler Dragon, third
50 Breast: Porter Luksic, first

14 & UNDER
200 Free: Owen Kiluk, second
200 IM: Reid Luksic, second
50 Free: Collin Masters, first; Ryan Cheskiewicz, third
100 Free: Owen Kiluk, third
100 Back: Collin Masters, second
100 Breast: Reid Luksic, third



Members of the Dallas High School girls basketball team cheer on fellow players during an informal game held to celebrate Meet the Players Night.



A informal basketball game with family members, including Dallas High School player Sabrina Zurek and her mother, Sandy, who played basketball at Coughlin, was the highlight of Meet the Players Night at the Dallas High School gymnasium on December 6.

Meet the lady cagers at DHS

The Dallas High School girls basketball team held a Meet the Players Night on December 6, complete with a game played between members of the team and their families and friends.