

September 25, 2013

Haddonfield, Collingswood



ROBERT LINNEHAN / WIRE PHOTO

Haddonfield High School tennis coach Jeff Holman is now the most successful high school coach in the country, after clinching his 1,000th win last week. The team celebrated Holman's success after the match.



Tennis coach nets 1,000th win

By Robert Linnehan

Wire Executive Editor

If you live in Haddonfield, there are three things that are certain in your life. Death, taxes and Jeff Holman coaching successful boys and girls tennis seasons each year at Haddonfield Memorial High School.

Holman, the most successful high school tennis coach in the country according to career wins, reached the 1,000-victory milestone in his tenure as the girls varsity tennis coach.

He reached the milestone on Thursday, Sept. 19, with a victory over Audubon High School.

The athletes of the varsity team gave him a round of applause as he tried to hold back his emotions. A number of previous athletes

See TENNIS page 4

TENNIS

from page 1

were in attendance at the match.

"I got a lot more emotional than I expected. My family and past players showed up to the match, so it was emotional," he said. "I'm reliving the past right now. My sister was actually on the first team that I coached."

Haddonfield Athletic Director Lefty Banos presented Holman with a plaque after the victory.

He thanked Holman for his years of coaching and for his dedication to the young men and women of Haddonfield.

"There are so many people here today because you've meant so much to everyone in this school district," Banos said. "One-thousand victories is just a number, but there are tens of thousands of lives that you have touched over the years."

Barring a disaster for this

fall's girls varsity season, Holman should reach 2,000 overall career victories in his tenure as the HMHS boys and girls varsity coach.

In the spring, Holman should also reach 1,000 career victories in his tenure as the boys varsity tennis coach. Right now, he sits at 996 victories.

In addition to having talented squads year in and year out, Holman said one of the factors that has helped the program each year is being able to schedule a high number of matches each season.

Holman helps the cause by driving the team bus to each match so the school doesn't have to pay a bus driver to do so.

"I do still drive the team bus. I know that we can schedule more matches this way because our school isn't paying a bus driver," he said. "Think about it, there are no officials required at a tennis match, as opposed to a football game where you

have to transport the team, the cheerleaders, the band, and pay the officials. You can schedule many more matches this way."

Holman began his tennis-coaching career in 1976 with the varsity girls tennis team. He didn't begin coaching the boys team until 1978.

What most don't know, Holman said, is he actually started his high school coaching career as a freshmen and junior varsity basketball coach when he came to Haddonfield Memorial High School.

As a young coach, Holman quickly learned a lesson that he would hold onto for the rest of his coaching career. In one of his first years of coaching, he decided that he could only effectively coach 16 girls on the varsity team, so he started to cut athletes who came out for the squad.

One of the girls he cut was Phoebe Figland, who came back the following season as a sophomore and made the

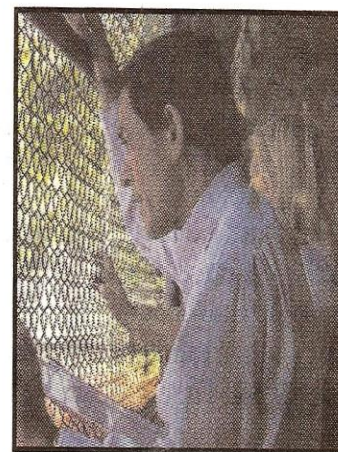
varsity squad. She quickly became one of the best athletes on the team and one of the most successful tennis players in HMHS history.

After that, Holman said he didn't institute cuts on the team anymore.

"I cut the number 17 girl, Phoebe Figland, and she came back as a sophomore and made varsity and became one of the best players in school history. She was our number two singles player on the 1980 team, which was the first Haddonfield tennis team to ever win a tournament of champions," he said. "I remember even though I cut her, she would come back after our practices and I would hit with her. She became a great college player as well. Luckily she wasn't someone who got discouraged."

Holman said he will continue to coach the teams as long as he is still with the Haddonfield School District.

"I'm lucky to work in a school like Haddonfield. In a



ROBERT LINNEHAN / WIRE PHOTO

Jeff Holman watches his team win for the 1,000th time.

town like ours, students care very much about excelling in whatever they're involved in. It's a town of achievers. As a coach, when you have an opportunity to work with students and families like that, you just feel very blessed," he said.

"I'm not really thinking about an end. I have no plans to retire as long as I feel I can still be effective; as long as it continues to be very satisfying I have no plans to step away."