

Venue change gives coach reason for new five-year plan

Last update: December 14, 2010 - 4:06 PM

Joe Mau is in his first year coaching the Andover boys' swimming and diving team, after six years coaching its Northwest Suburban rival Blaine. He's also a chemistry teacher, tennis coach for boys and girls at Andover, and an animated announcer for football, basketball and lacrosse games for the Huskies. Mau was a year-round swimmer in high school, but he didn't pick up a tennis racquet until college, where he learned the game and walked on to an NCAA Division II program. He recently chatted with the Star Tribune's Heather Rule.

Q What led you to leave Blaine and come to Andover to coach?

A It's tough to coach outside the building where you're teaching in. It just became a point where it was more and more challenging to coach at a high level to kids you don't necessarily get a chance to create a relationship with.

Q How do you plan to move Andover's team in the right direction?

A You kind of learn as you move that you've got to have what I call a five-year plan. Every year I'll make two or three changes, very important changes. Some of the changes have been morning practice; we're doing two a day. That's significant. No Andover team has ever swam in the morning.

Q What do you anticipate your feelings being for the Blaine dual meet?

A Oh, I'm not going to lie, I want to win [laughs]. I want them to do well, but I want these boys [Andover] to do better than [Blaine]. And I think that's just competition.

Q What are some goals you have for your first season at Andover?

A To win sections. You have to have that mindset. And if you never reach for the stars, you're never ever going to work hard enough to do your best. [The] second team goal is to beat Blaine. That's a good benchmark for us to reach.

Q What are some of your big coaching philosophies?

A Once is luck, twice is skill; that's my No. 1 "Mauism." The other thing I talk to them about is work ethic. Work hard every day and force yourself to push through that commitment and that's a life lesson that'll carry you into success with whatever you do with the rest of your time.

Q Which sport do you like more -- swimming or tennis?

A I enjoy both. They both present different things, and they both present a unique challenge. I think I'd miss one without the other, to be honest with you.

Q Has there ever been any confusion any time you're introducing yourself to someone?

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A [Laughs] After Friday night of prelims [at state three years ago], we take them [Blaine] to Texas Roadhouse. I call up and say, 'I'd like to make a reservation for eight, Joe Mau.' They thought I said Joe Mauer. They cleared out a whole corner of the restaurant, cleared a big table, didn't put anybody next to us. And I walk in, 'Reservation for Joe Mau.' And, of course, Andover kids worked there, and [an Andover senior] says, 'I told you it's not Mauer ... it was Joe Mau.' So, it was awesome. It was so funny. But that's the only confusion that I've had.

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