

Jan 3, 2021

Wow...we FINALLY got thru 2020 and while we are still dealing with many Covid issues and an uncertain dynamic as to when/how soon we can still get back to some semblance of normal, we are hopeful it will happen due to the beginning of vaccinations in the USA.

I hope all of you are well and you/your families are healthy and safe. That you had as nice a holiday as possible. I know many of you start back up with online learning tomorrow...hang in there...and keep doing as well as you can.

Season Updates: We had hoped to have an end of yr gathering/get together where we could do awards/talk about the kids/teams that hung in there thru this crazy time. That has always been one of the most special times about our program and so much fun. But as the season was winding down, the Covid numbers were going up all thru the state and especially in our county. It was not long before we were back in shutdown/long distance learning with restrictions on all team sports much like we had last spring. I kept plugging away on our team season handbook. It was hard to do this yr for several reasons but I got it done and it is decent. ***I sincerely hope you take the time to look at and especially read the letter I wrote to each of you on the inside cover along with the pages at the beginning where I summarize the season/kids/meets.*** I talked about each of you in there. It was not easy to do knowing this was most likely the last time I would be doing that with you. Because of mail delays, our awards finally got here the Monday of Christmas week. So that is what we will try to do this week. See notes below concerning those and the link on the team website as well.

WED JAN 6....3:30-7:30....Coach P's garage....Read more info on website!!

In retrospect, I think we had a very good yr. It was, without a doubt, the toughest yr I have ever had as a head coach. It seemed like every day we were faced with new challenges in trying to put together a team/keep our team going. It started last spring and it literally did not end until the TC Running Showcase. Just the fact that we were able to get thru the entire season without missing a meet and compete as well as we did was an accomplishment that speaks very highly of each of you and the assistant coaches who never gave up on you or what we were trying to do. Once we started racing, we only had 1 runner who did not finish the season...that was amazing. I say it every yr and I mean it..EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU contributed to that!! Thanks. Obviously, I wish a lot of things would have gone differently, but we made it. And it was certainly a season we will never forget.

Personal Updates: Barb and I are doing ok. We have started the transition to the house in Plymouth. I would guess we have 60% of our stuff moved so far and are now able to live in either place if needed/as we continue to adjust. We were in Willmar pretty much right up to the holidays but have spent the last 2 wks in the cities doing holiday things/being with

family/transitioning. My oldest son Grant and his family contracted Covid right before Thanksgiving. We are thankful they were able to get thru it fairly well although both parents had a tougher time with it. (they think they got it at school where they were in hybrid learning) At the same time, one of the people who was my assistant coach in Bowman had her husband get Covid and die; my high school best friends wife lost her mom to Covid in December—it is real and it hits people hard! Please continue to be smart and safe. Levi, our 2 yr old grandson, broke his leg last week sliding. He had to get a cast on it but is starting to get around ok again. They are so tough at that age. Because we have kept in our family bubble, we were all able to be together at Christmas which was so awesome. It was the first time we had done that since this summer. ***We plan on being in Willmar every week for at least a few days (usually during the week)*** as we continue to pack/move/get house in order so “IF” any of you need to see me, just let me know and we can set something up that works time wise.

Team Handbooks/Awards/Individual Exit Meetings: Once we went into long distance learning and state-imposed restrictions on sports again, we were not able to finish the season as we normally do. But with sports in the state resuming this Monday, we think we can safely meet to hand out the above items. The procedure for that is listed on the website with how we want to do that. I really hope each of you can find the time this Wednesday to come by for a few minutes and pick up your things. You don’t have a clue as to how much I have missed seeing you. I think one of the toughest things about this Covid stuff was just missing that daily contact I had with all of you on a personal basis. Remember, I was the guy/coach you could find just about every morning before school and at the end of each day in the commons. That connection was one of my favorite parts of coaching. I know it has been a while but if any of you want to visit about what you can/should be doing in the off-season; I would gladly do that with you. We can set up a time that works for both of us. I think it would help all of you so much. A couple kids have suggested I put something like that for each of you on the website but that gets to be a little too much “out there” for everyone else. I have not resigned yet from the coaching. I want to be sure everything is in place before I do that and we have the program in a place where it can continue to be one of the best in Mn. And we are that!! I will use the website and email/group chats/team leaders to do that as much as possible as we start the winter seasons/move into spring. (I am hoping all of you get a full complete winter season as well!!)

If you are not in a winter sport, realize we would be setting up “winter conditioning” next week for those of you not doing a sport this winter. Or wanting to stay in shape. One thing we have seen in the short time we have been in the cities are groups of kids from Hopkins, Wayzata, Minnetonka, and Edina all out running already. They know what it takes to be good. You need to be on the same page.

Enough for now...hope to see most of you on Wednesday...Miss you all!! Coach P