

UWO alumnus coaches 'bigger, stronger, faster' high school athletes

by Alyssa Kadansky - Wednesday, September 04, 2013

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Strength and conditioning coach and University of Wisconsin Oshkosh alumnus Dennis Moon '77, of Wautoma, uses his passion for athletics to make a difference in the lives of students. His dedication and hard work make Moon one of the recipients of the 2013 Distinguished Alumni Award.

Moon tore up the football field as a student at UW Oshkosh, where he was a Second Team All-Conference Running Back under Hall of Fame Coach Russ Young. During this time, the UWO football team won two Wisconsin State University Conference (WSUC) Championships.

Moon graduated from UWO with a bachelor's degree in physical education with minors in health and driver education, and later earned his master's degree from the University of Wisconsin La-Crosse in physical education with an emphasis in strength and conditioning.

He brought his expertise in sports and teaching to Highland High School, Wautoma High School and Omro High School, where he coached football, baseball, wrestling, girls' basketball and track and field and taught physical education, driver education and health education. He was recognized as a coach and a teacher who was able to merge the worlds of education and athletics into a meaningful experience for his students.

UWO alumna Kathryn Badura '69, of Wautoma, has known Moon for 32 years and has worked with him and followed his coaching career.

"Dennis Moon is able to blend teaching and coaching with integrity, always complying with athletic, conference, WIAA, NCAA and FHSAA guidelines and codes," Badura said. "Dennis has achieved and continues to develop and expect academic excellence, and individual and team success."

Moon worked at Wautoma High School from 1982 to 2012, where he was a head football coach, an assistant football coach-defensive coordinator, a head baseball coach, an assistant track and field throws coach, an assistant wrestling coach and an assistant softball coach. He also initiated and coached Wautoma's first-ever powerlifting team and was the director of strength and conditioning.

During his time at Wautoma High School, he led the teams to win a Wisconsin Athletic Association Division IV State Championship, four conference championships. He earned a 33-13 record in his last four years of coaching. He then went on to become the assistant linebacker coach at UWO.

His excellence in coaching was recognized with induction into the Wisconsin Football Coaches Hall of Fame.

"Coach Moon's commitment to excellence is very apparent based on the team's success under his

reign,” Wautoma High School athletic director Tom Butt said. “In addition, former players come back to visit him, thanking him for what they learned related to life skills. He takes the necessary measures to make sure the players’ skill development is where it needs to be for team success.”

Moon’s commitment to student excellence in athletics at Wautoma High School led to his current position as the Midwest director of Bigger Faster Stronger (BFS), a company committed to helping athletes succeed on and off the field by providing coaches and athletes with specific training programs. He introduced the program to Wautoma High School, making it a powerhouse in regional athletics.

“That was the beginning of the success of athletics in Wautoma,” said Jeff Kasuboski, Wautoma Area School District administrator. “In 2003, our football team made its first trip to the playoffs since 1980. Our girls’ basketball team won three conference championships... and we won two state titles: football in 2008 and track in 2009.”

BFS also helped the district receive a federal grant to improve physical education programs.

“The BFS program has been a major cornerstone in the Wautoma athletics success under Moon’s leadership and facilitation,” Butt said.

Moon has been the recipient of a variety of prestigious awards for his commitment to students both off the field and on. He has received the Emrich/Reicke Jones Award, an award presented by the Professional Football Strength and Conditioning Coaches Society to one high school, college and professional coach each year. He also won the Russ Young Leadership Award from UWO.

“I realize Dennis has won a number of awards and honors for his accomplishments, but his real successes are not the awards he has received, but rather the difference he has made in kids’ lives,” Kasuboski said. “He has left a positive impression on the thousands of kids he has coached and taught. That alone makes him a distinguished UWO alumnus in my eyes.”

Moon and nine other award winners will be honored at a banquet during Homecoming Weekend, October 11-12. They will attend a reception, dinner and awards program in Reeve Memorial Ballroom on Friday, and will have the opportunity to watch the Homecoming football game from the press box at Oshkosh Sports Complex on Saturday. Award winners will be recognized on the field during halftime by Chancellor Richard Wells.

The Alumni Awards Dinner will be held beginning at 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 11 in Reeve Memorial Union. Reserve your spot at the event by calling (920) 424-3349 or sending an email to alumni@uwosh.edu. Tickets are \$30 per person.

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