

Michler wins 800th

By Joe Lyons
POST-DISPATCH



CBC coach Terry Michler acknowledges the crowd during a ceremony honoring him for his 800th coaching victory.
(Photo by Scott Rovak)

wasn't that big a deal to me _ it's just a number _ but that I was glad that they were a part of it," Michler recalled. "On Sunday, when we gathered just before the game, I told them that 800 had always been my goal and that since I'd reached that goal, I would be resigning and that (assistant coach) Tom Farishon would be taking over for the rest of the season. The dumb-founded looks I got from the kids _ and from Tom _ just made my day. Then I told them I was kidding and to make sure they were ready because everybody was going to play."

The Cadets (18-2-3) went out and beat Jefferson City 3-0, upping Michler's career record to 801-197-96.

"All 800 wins means is that you've been around a while and that you've been fortunate enough to work with a lot of talented players," said Michler, who is 62 years old and in his 39th season of teaching and coaching at his alma mater. "To me, what stands out about the numbers is the level of competition we've played through the years. Competing in the Metro Catholic Conference, playing teams from all over the country and knowing that we never ducked anybody who wanted to play us, that's what makes a number like 800 stand out."

A standout in both soccer and football at CBC, Michler actually coached a couple of seasons at Bishop Hogan in Kansas City while attending Rockhurst College but has been unable to secure those records, so his career numbers are exclusively from CBC.

Early on, Michler set his sights on returning to CBC to coach soccer. But he nearly missed out on

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Saturday night at CBC, with a 1-0 victory over Blue Valley Northwest of suburban Kansas City, the host Cadets picked up victory No. 800 for their coach, Terry Michler.

The next afternoon, the winningest high school soccer coach in America decided to have a little fun with his squad.

"The night before, I'd told them that the 800

that chance.

"I had finished my career at Rockhurst and had signed with the Kansas City Spurs (of the old North American Soccer League)," he recalled. "A couple of weeks later, I get a call from CBC asking me if I wanted to teach and coach the B-team. But I was 21 and had to give pro soccer a chance, so I turned them down."

Two years later, CBC called again. This time, with an opportunity to coach varsity soccer, Michler quickly accepted the job.

"When I think about CBC soccer, the thing that stands out is the tradition, and that's something I try to instill in our players every season," Michler said. "You're not only playing for yourself, you're also representing all the great players and teams that went before you and you're also facing the challenge of setting the bar for the guys who play here in the future."

Under Michler, CBC has won five state championships and played in six other title matches, his squads have reached the final four 15 times and have 23 district titles _ including a string of 16 in succession from 1978 through 1993 _ in 38 seasons.

He has had eight players compete with various national teams and 17 named as high school All-Americans. Thirty-two former players have played professionally, with 271 getting a chance to play college soccer.

Under Michler, CBC soccer has become known for its consistent level of success. But there were some lean years, too.

"My first year, we went 25-4, not bad, but not quite as good as the 39-2-2 the year before," he recalled. "That next year, we fell of to 12-8 and I was starting to wonder what was going on. But we managed to get some things sorted out."

A student as well as a teacher of the game of soccer, Michler has made a couple of trips to Holland for coaching courses and training sessions. He's also written three books _ Coaching Soccer Champions, Full Season Training Program _ CBC High School 2005 and Dutch Total Football.

Michler cites his ability to adapt as a key to remaining in teaching and coaching for 39 years.

"Sure, the kids have changed, but that's because our society has changed," he said. "But the key, I've found, is that you have to work to find a meeting place somewhere in the middle, where both sides can work together toward a common goal."

Michler's current squad struggled early but has come on strong in recent weeks. The Cadets, who host Oakville Wednesday at 6 p.m. and Vianney Saturday at 2 p.m., are on a 13-0-1 streak that includes CYC/Bob Guelker Memorial and Gateway City Classic titles. CBC has not lost since falling 1-0

on a deflection at Chaminade on Sept. 19.

The Cadets are ranked nationally by both ESPN RISE and the National Soccer Coaches Association of America.

"What I love about this team is its depth," Michler said. "When we struggled a bit early in the season, I was able to make some moves and the guys who came in did the job. Now, we have a whole bunch of guys who can play and who are playing with a great spirit. They're playing hard, they're playing for one another and they're playing at a very high level.

"But this is kind of tricky part of the season. You've worked through the early season and the mid-season tournaments, so now it's really important to keep we keep our focus so that we're as prepared as possible for districts."

In a similar position last year, CBC (23-5) was upset 1-0 in overtime by archrival DeSmet.

"We didn't have a bad year, we just peaked at the wrong time," Michler explained.

Michler, who will receive the prestigious Silver Boot next month at the 54th annual CYC Sports Banquet, said he would like to teach a few more years and hopefully continue coaching after that.

"I really love the preparation that goes into practices and I love the challenge of coaching in games, too," he said. "To see your players take something they learned in drills and put it to use on the field is extremely rewarding. Let's face it, the game itself hasn't changed all that much over the years, but you always have those adjustments and nuances that keep it challenging."

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