

Tom Shaneyfelt

I am honored to be selected. I think I did a decent job, but one problem is there are too many people to mention by name who contributed to the success I got credit for. Also, I believe many coaches could have had similar or even better results in a situation like I had at Clearwater.

Born and raised in Indiana, I saw, by college, coaching basketball becoming part of my life. By the time I finished B.S. and M.S. degrees at Indiana University, I also thought some Florida sunshine sounded good. I settled in Pinellas County and, after a few months, got my first teaching job in a mid-county middle school. Coincidentally, that was the 1980-81 school year, so Clearwater basketball was in the news. I did a couple more years in middle school, teaching English and filling the open girls' basketball coaching position. This led to three years as the girls' JV coach at Osceola High and seven with Varsity. In those 12 years, I learned that Clearwater was a school where coaches and teachers wanted to be. For a long stretch, CHS was ranked the top athletic program in Pinellas way more often than any other. And the only hope of getting a teaching position at Clearwater was if someone unexpectedly chose to retire. So, in 1993, when I began coaching here, so much was already in place. Girl's basketball didn't become a high school sport in Florida until 1975. At Clearwater, Anne Balderson, the ultra-successful volleyball coach, and others, had quickly established a very good girls' basketball team, so all we had to do was continue the tradition, honor, and pride already in place. I also had helpful, encouraging administrators. And many invaluable assistant coaches. I **will** mention one by name. My future wife Kathy joined me to lead the JV girls in winning over 80 percent of their games, and she assisted with varsity. My strengths were pretty much limited to scouting, preparation, and game strategy, and Kathy provided everything else including her special way of connecting with the players. Of course, great players, products of great parents, continued as the main ingredient for success. In the 20 years we were here with the girls, 28 players earned full college scholarships, adding to the 23 earned during the prior 18 years.

As for basketball accomplishments in those 20 years, our Clearwater girls won Districts 17 times, were Conference Champs nine times, made the Sweet 16 eighteen times, made the Final 8 twelve times, made eight trips to the Final 4, and were State Runners-Up three times. They combined for 508 wins and 113 losses, meaning they won 82 percent of their games and **averaged** 25.4 wins per year. That was the thing I was most proud of. The years 1993 to 2006 were part of a transitional period when people consistently had more options with new schools,

both public and private, being built, and with so many other changes in Pinellas County and in society in general continuing to happen. Yet we were able to maintain consistency for 20 years. In 2008, when the NCAA Women's Final Four was held in Tampa, the Tribune picked the "Top 5" in several categories for girls' high school basketball for ten or so counties near Tampa Bay, and Clearwater was selected the number three "most storied" program all time.

All this allowed me, in 27 years of girls' varsity coaching, counting Osceola, to be named County Coach of the Year seven times by the PCAC coaches, nine times by the St. Pete Times, who also picked me twice for their All-Suncoast Coach of the Year, and seven times by the Tampa Tribune. The FACA selected me 5A State Coach of the Year twice, and the FHSAA once with their Dairy Farmer's Award. In the "Top 5" series mentioned above, the Tampa Tribune ranked me the entire region's #1 "legendary" girls' high school basketball coach. Good thing I had absolutely no ego!

After years of coaching boys on my son's young teams, I opted for a little change of pace and became coach of the Clearwater boys in 2014. I knew going in this could only be for my last three years before retirement, and the goal was to steady the program for a future transition. We had some success, but it felt in the end like more time was needed to really turn a corner.

The grand total of 704 wins as a Varsity Head Coach was the 10th most all-time for boys' or girls' high school basketball coaches in Florida. With 197 losses this amounted to winning 78 percent of all games. In 30 total years, our teams **averaged** over 23 wins per year. This led to my also being selected to the Clearwater Basketball Hall of Fame, the FACA Hall of Fame, and, most recently, the FABC Court of Legends in 2015.

I wasn't expecting any more recognition for a time that now seems like a lifetime ago, but, in honor of everyone that helped make it happen, it is appreciated. I'm not sure it could have happened anywhere else.