

Girls Coach of the Year - 2004

Jerry Morse-Karzen - New Trier

The winner of this year's Girls Coach of the Year, Jerry Morse-Karzen, is no stranger to the limelight, having previously won this prestigious award in 2002. However, his team's achievements in 2004, including winning the IHSA team title and going 15-0 in dual matches, as well as his unwavering dedication to coaching, teaching, and growing the game of tennis, have earned him the honor again this year.

As Jerry puts it, "Most of my players come to me having had a fair amount of tennis experience. Where I've been able to help is in selecting the right combinations for doubles teams and building doubles skills. In singles, I've preached patience and mental toughness and tried to give each youngster the best game plan to maximize her chances to win. I'm really dedicated to a three-pronged message that I brought to New Trier four years ago – we're good people, we work hard, and we play to win."

Jim Bloch, New Trier Athletic Director, writes "Several years ago, I was faced with the daunting task of filling this head coaching position. Prior to interviewing a healthy list of very solid candidates, I created the ideal list of characteristics I hoped to find in one person. I suspected it would be most unlikely to find that one individual, and I would end up hiring the person who had most of these key characteristics. After the interviews, the decision was actually quite easy for me, because one candidate emerged far beyond the others. Obviously that person was Jerry. It was Jerry because he "had it," all of it . . . I looked for someone who had integrity, as I wanted a role model for our athletes. Character does count – a lot. It was Jerry; it is Jerry."

As assistant coach Bill Lange puts it in support of Morse-Karzen, "Jerry had 94 girls playing tennis for New Trier this year . . . he had over 100 girls try out for the team. I believe this is one of the biggest programs in the state . . . this illustrates Jerry's commitment to have as many girls experience a team tennis program with good coaching, and give them a chance to improve their tennis and make new friends as they go through high school. I hope that your committee will consider Jerry for Girls Coach of the Year. He has done a wonderful job this year and the run that the girls made in the state meet was the most outstanding series of matches that I have ever seen a team play."

Congratulations, Jerry, on a well-deserved honor.