

Hall of Fame Inductee

Bob Smith – Leyden High School

Bob Smith personifies a coach capable of making something out of nothing. Bob's meager beginnings as a volunteer coach at Joliet West 44 tennis seasons ago were followed by a tenure at Freeport High School that included a 223-31 record, three sectional titles, eleven 2nd place conference finishes, three state top 20 finishes, and nine conference coach of the year awards. He has continued his career by growing a grassroots effort at Leyden High School that currently boasts more than 100 players. Bob is a magician in understanding what it takes to build and run a competitive tennis program in Illinois with little to no raw materials.

In addition to his achievements on the court, Bob has also been a mainstay of service and dedication to our sport off the court. He has served as a board member of the IHSTCA for well over a decade, including a stint as President and participation in seven other committees. He has also been a member of the boys state seeding committee and has served the IHSA as a court monitor at the state tournament as well as on the IHSA Advisory Committee. Bob has conducted workshops for coaches on various topics from coaching tips to how to build a program. One of the reasons we are here today stems from the fervent work done by self-sacrificing coaches like Bob Smith.

Bob has been the model of service and devotion well beyond his home school and has been relentless and passionate about growing the game of tennis in Illinois. He has worked with kids having little to no tennis background at two separate high schools and conjured up a fever that has spread, having plenty of successes along the way. Bob has instilled in his players the highest degrees of sportsmanship and commitment.

Bob Smith has made magic in places that no magic existed before he waved his wand. He has shown his commitment to tennis in multiple ways and has never sought individual accolades. He is a role model for young coaches who look for examples of how to build a program the right way.

Congratulations, Bob, on many years of successful tennis coaching. We hope you will have many, many more. Welcome to the IHSTCA Hall of Fame!