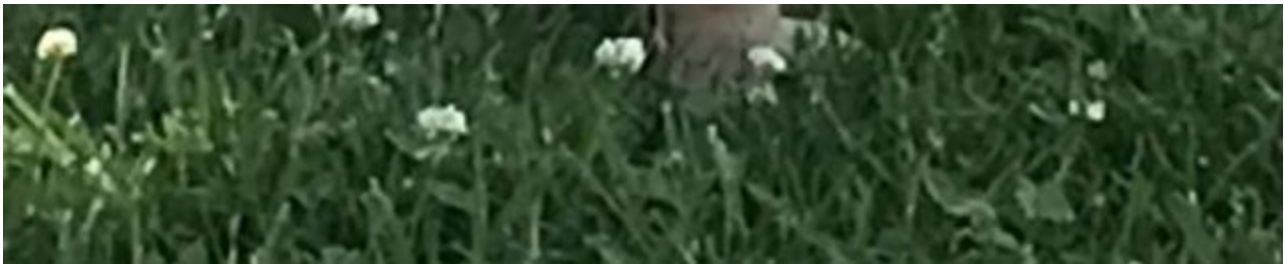




Bob Rettle: A Dad and much more than a Coach to his Edwardsville YMCA Breakers' youth

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
June 17 2018 12:35 PM













EDWARDSVILLE - Fourteen months ago, legendary Edwardsville YMCA Breakers swim coach Bob Rettle and his wife, Trish, had their daughter, Stella Jean.

Rettle, who is a father-figure to a pack of Breakers squad members also has step children Stephen, Ashley, Anthony, along with Ashlie, Natalie, Nate and Alyssa, all who are as he describes “amazing and also so very different.”

“What a joy to experience life with all of them,” Rettle said.

Stella was born May 2, 2017, with Trish, who he calls the force that keeps him going and the “love of his life.”

“What a blessing Stella is who will soon be 14 months old,” he said. “To hear her wailing strong cry at the moment of her birth is by far the highlight of my life. There is no way to describe what she means to me and Trish. Like I said, she’s a star in our lives.”

For years, the Breakers’ swimmers have been like Rettle’s own kids. Some as young as 4 years old, start with Rettle after going through the YMCA entry-level swim lessons and eventually are with him until they leave for college at age 18. The final Breakers banquet for those athletes and their parents with their film slides and presentation is always emotional. Rarely, does he leave that event without a tear in his eyes as he reflects on all those youth have meant to him and the program and Bob to them and their lives.

“As all parents know, having a newborn means less sleep, lots of dirty diapers, food thrown all over the kitchen table and endless cute moments. All things we would never change.” he said.

What advice does Rettle have have to other dads who are joining the fatherhood circle?

“Make them your priority. It’s your calling. Hold their mother in the highest esteem, she bears the greatest burden by a long shot as whatever we as Dads do help and provide pales in comparison to the responsibility they are tasked with.

“For step fathers, understand your position and your responsibility. You are possibly part of a trio of parents raising those children. Always be positive as you can be about those other parents involved. Some day it will make a difference in the step children’s relationship with their parent. Act with tact, be wise, be free of ego.”

Coach Rettle said many of the athletes he has coached come and visit him frequently.

“To take a swim or just catch up or maybe talk over life to get advice or direction,” Rettle said. “Maybe they are struggling. Some know specific things about my history that can be useful so they seek help. I think we have nearly 125 kids that have gone on

to Division 1 college scholarships rewards because of their efforts in the pool. Many others went on to swim and thrive in other collegiate levels such as D2, D3, NAIA, and junior college. I hope I have helped make that possible for them in some small way.

“Many of the kids have gone on to work for me in different capacities. I have to mention my loyal sidekick Christian Rhoten who has guided the EHS swim and dive program to continued excellence. Also, the intensely dedicated Eric Hudson whose work takes us to another level and a higher calling, Sam Shaw who made the first four years of EHS for swimming amazing for nearly 2000 students. How lucky am I to have known these kids since they first learned how to swim.”

Tragically, the Breakers family has lost a few swimmers.

“I must mention former Breakers Andrew Dresch, who we lost in 2001 I believe,” he said. “I still save the trophy from the St. Louis District Championship that the Breakers won his senior year. His contribution was significant. Also, my thoughts are with Austin Wittmer, and his parents Warren and Linda, who passed two years ago. We lost them both tragically.”

Rettle continued: “Additionally, thinking way back to my first year coaching with the Edwardsville YMCA Breakers, kids like Sara Rallo, Gilliam Woods, Missy Holloway, Kara Holloway, Ben and Becky Broom, Chip Metzler, Erin and Jon Mattson, Josh Jacobson, Greg, Mitchel, Lauren and Mike Taplin, Max and Pete Byers, Nick and Rick Roberts, Sean Workman, Drew and Kate May, to modern day stars like Bailey Grinter, and my dear friends the Gremauds. There are too many names to mention. Starting with Sara Rallo, these kids and their families built a foundation of excellence for the Breakers. And the later names have continued that spirit of excellence.”

Coach Bob said to sum things up, it is a passion to help children.

“The great privilege of my life has been to be called coach, be called boss, and most of all to be called Dad by my own amazing children,” he said. “It’s a job where failure is unacceptable. Be humble, fathers. Every single thing you do matters to them and their future.”

Rettle provided one more piece of humility for other fathers: “Remember, Father’s Day is not about you. It’s about the kids that you love and call you dad. It’s about us fathers serving these kids and the responsibility we owe them. Don’t expect. Give. Go to their stuff. Watch them play soccer. Watch them play ball. Watch them swim. Watch a Barbie movie with your 11-year-old. Watch Paw Patrol with your baby. Watch a dumb movie with your boys. Play a video game with your teen. Engage them, dad!”





