

Coaching Legend: Lori Blade Honored At EHS With Basketball Court Replica

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - In pregame ceremonies prior to the Edwardsville girls basketball game against Belleville West on the Tigers Senior Night Feb. 10, former head coach Lori Blade was honored with a presentation of a replica of the basketball court at Lucco-Jackson Gym with a listing of her accomplishments as head coach of the Tigers and Carrollton High School.

In her 26-year career coaching for both the Hawks and Tigers, Blade compiled a career record of 743-92, number eight on the all-time list in IHSA history, when she retired after the 2019-20 season, winning IHSA Class A championships at Carrollton in 2001 and 2002, with the Hawks coming in second in 1998.

Blade's Tigers teams finished second twice, in 2012 and 2017, winning 17 consecutive IHSA regionals to go along with six appearances in the IHSA state finals. She was elected to the Illinois Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame in 2016 and the SIU-Edwardsville Hall of Fame in 2017.

Coach Blade commended her replacement Caty Ponce, also a former player and the new Edwardsville head girls basketball coach, for doing "an awesome job" while she was being honored.

"All the kids through the years, all the parents and fans in both of the communities I worked in (Edwardsville and Carrollton) I couldn't have asked for more," Coach Blade said. "It's a group effort I just had the privilege of being a part of it. Thank you so much."

Blade still coaches the Tigers' softball team and is the first Illinois coach to win over 700 games in two different sports.

Blade was also a standout athlete at Casey-Westfield High School and played for the Cougars in the mid-80s, graduating in 1988 with a degree in physical education and continues to teach physical education at EHS.

[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)