

MH the Hurst legacy

Student athlete pays tribute to longtime coach and teacher

36

years of coaching was an impressive feat in itself.

36 years coaching at the same school? Almost unheard of.

Coach Mark Hurst was the epitome of a lifelong Westlake Chaparral, having started his coaching career at Westlake in 1980. Both of my parents went to Westlake — my mom graduated in 1984 and my dad in 1986.

Since Coach Hurst helped with both football and track, he coached both of them throughout their high school athletic careers. After having won 15 district track championships, he was one of the most esteemed coaches of track and field in the entire state of Texas, so there was no doubt that he knew his stuff.

Since I was a “legacy” kid — growing up in Westlake my entire life — wherever we were, no matter what sort of Westlake athletic event it was, I was constantly being introduced to coaches and alumni from my parents’ time at Westlake. I vividly remembered Coach Hurst on the sidelines of the football fields from when I was a young ball boy watching him coach the defensive backs and kickers, always positive and never openly showing his frustration.

But, as we all knew, track was a different story. Even from a young age, Chap track was a huge part of my life, and I knew that Coach Hurst would be stressed at Chap Relays, despite the fact that his coaching would inevitably lead the team to a certain home-track victory. Every year I can remember until middle school, I was a time-runner for the Chap Relays, which was probably the single most stressful event out of any

sport all year and also with the worst luck in regards to weather. As a runner, my job was to take the times that the finish clerks recorded at the finish line and sprint them up the stadium all the way to the press box so that they could be officially recorded and announced.

These were my first experiences with Coach Hurst, and they were some of the most memorable and what instilled in me the desire to become a future athlete like my parents with him as my coach. When I became a part of the Westlake track team as a freshman, I already knew that I would be a hurdler for him. Though I was quite possibly the most inflexible person alive, Coach was able to work some magic and turn me into one of his many well-coached, disciplined and district-winning hurdlers.

For me and an innumerable number of other Westlake athletes, Coach Hurst was the single reason for our passion in track and field. I knew that I spoke for all of his athletes when I said that we learned countless invaluable lessons from Coach Hurst and that he was an incredible inspiration to every single one of us through his coaching and his unmatched bravery in his fight with cancer.

Sitting in St. John Neumann Catholic Church on Oct. 12, surrounded by the rest of the Westlake football team and coaches, among countless friends and supporters from the community, it was easy to sense the power of Coach Hurst’s loving personality radiating through the pews. It was evident that Coach Mark Hurst made an impact. An impact on 36 years worth of players, coaches, teachers and family members alike that could never be duplicated or replaced.

We love you, Coach.

