



PETER RUSCITTO Coach Teacher Role Model

Juliet Thompson Hochman '81 credits Peter Ruscitto as one of the most influential people in instilling her love of sport. He taught her to support her teammates, created a love of movement and injected in her a love for competition. She spoke to him about his experience as a teacher and coach at CRS.

Although he claims to eschew any formal coaching philosophy, it is not hard to define Peter Ruscitto's approach to coaching and teaching elementary and middle school students. Ruscitto arrived at CRS in 1976

as an assistant to the headmaster and 7/8 English and social studies teacher. Coming into an environment in the 1970s where teachers and coaches allowed students a high degree of self-direction in both the classroom and on the sports field, Ruscitto instilled a more traditional respect of structure and expectations for both individuals and his teams as a whole. While supporting CRS's continued philosophy of no-cut, full-participation teams, he demanded more of students on the field in terms of individual effort, consistency and sportsmanship.

"Coaching and teaching are basically the same thing," Ruscitto remarks. "It is a huge advantage as a coach to have players who are also your students. You can better determine what makes them tick as individuals, and you can better understand why a kid might be having a bad day in practice or in a game if you have already seen them that day in the classroom."

Ruscitto's former students remember a firm, fair coach and teacher with high expectations. He was the only one to wear a tie at a time when no other teachers donned formal apparel. There was no messing around in his English or social studies classes and laps were run for tardiness at practice. Michael Earley '83, now a teacher and coach at Falmouth Academy, remembers Ruscitto explaining, "If you hear my voice on the field, I am not yelling AT you, I am yelling TO you." Hearing this recently, Ruscitto quipped, "I guess that must be my coaching philosophy: it's all about the prepositions."

Despite his high expectations on the field and in the classroom, Ruscitto does not confuse achievement with restrictive competition. He still feels very strongly about elementary and middle schools offering opportunities for all children to participate on their after-school sports teams. He remembers that there were parents in the late 1970s who wanted a more competitive sports experience for their child. Ruscitto applauds CRS's continued stress on the participatory aspect of the interscholastic after-school sports program, remarking "Of course it's fun to win, but there is so much to be learned on the field and young athletes of all abilities should get a chance to play."

And as for that coaching philosophy? *"I wouldn't dare try to define it. It's all about team chemistry...and the weather. Rain is toxic to team morale."*