

Rich Goulet September 3, 2017 4:33 pm

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Hall-of-Fame B.C. high school basketball coach says he was forced to resign due to parents' complaints



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WATCH: B.C. Hall of Fame basketball coach Rich Goulet says he was forced to resign from his volunteer coaching position due to pressure from players' parents. Jill Bennett reports.

For more than four decades, Rich Goulet has been a fixture in B.C.'s high school basketball community, leading the Pitt Meadows Marauders to more than 1,000 wins and three provincial titles.

Now he says he was asked to resign from his volunteer coaching position due to pressure from players' parents.

Goulet, who was inducted into the Basketball B.C. Hall of Fame in 2012, said he stepped down after the school's principal received complaints from one or more players' parents back in April.

After a public meeting where members of the community expressed anger over the decision, Goulet was reinstated and the school board launched an investigation.

Following an investigation, he was asked to step down again in mid-July.

Goulet said none of the parents spoke to him directly about their concerns.

"[The] parents are the cowards," he said. "They didn't even come forward and give their complaints. They just hid behind the public school system."

From 2011: A profile of Rich Goulet

Although he strongly suspects who the upset parents are, he's still not sure who launched a complaint against him.

"You can't even plan your own defence because you don't even know what the situation was that led to these situations."

He suspects that some parents were upset about their children's lack of playing time.

"Some of these kids don't want to hear that they don't have any ability or that their ability is not good enough," Goulet said.

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brain tumour

Paul Eberhardt, president of the B.C. High School Boys' Basketball Association, has expressed dismay over the decision, saying Goulet should have been able to end his stellar coaching career on his own terms.

"The gym at that school should be named after him," he said, noting that Goulet has likely raised well over \$1 million for the school during his tenure.

"It is disturbing that in his case, a 40-plus-year career can be brought down by complaints from a few parents.

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"There has to be a better process, a fairer way to deal with these kinds of complaints. Because to us, that certainly didn't appear to happen here."

Goulet knows his high-intensity "in your face" coaching style can rub players and parents the wrong way.

"It's a competitive sport," he said. "You want people who are going to compete. Also, high school basketball is a sport where you have to make the team. You just don't automatically get on the team, and once you are on the team, there are responsibilities and accountability."

"Old school would be a fair way to describe him," Eberhardt said. "He was very demanding. He expected the best from his players and he pushed them very hard. Not everybody is meant for that."

"He asked a lot from his players, but none of them, I guarantee you, have ever outworked him."

On Sunday, the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows School confirmed Goulet is "no longer volunteering for our district."

"As a school district, we have an obligation to take seriously and thoroughly review any concerns that are presented to us. This obligation pertains equally to new and longtime employees/volunteers," the district said in a statement.

The district went on to say they could not comment further due to privacy provisions.

According to Eberhardt, one of the few silver linings to Goulet's departure has been the outpouring of support the veteran coach has received from B.C.'s basketball community.

Former NBA All-Star Steve Nash tweeted out his support for Goulet as did Miami Heat centre Kelly Olynyk and former Los Angeles Laker Robert Sacre.



Steve Nash
@SteveNash

Lucky I got to play for Coach Goulet! twitter.com/bobby_sacre/st

...

12:24 AM - Sep 1, 2017

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Kelly Olynyk
@KellyOlynyk

Learned a ton from coach Goulet, wouldn't trade the opportunity to have played for him ever, helped me immensely on my path to where I am. twitter.com/stevenash/stat...

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Robert Sacre
@Bobby_Sacre

There is a problem when 1 of B.C.'s best highschool coaches gets fired for being a coach. Nothing but love for the Great Goulet.

4:04 AM - Aug 31, 2017

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Goulet said he's heard from countless former players over the years who have thanked him for his tough-love approach.

"The problem here is, when you're teaching life lessons, at the moment you're teaching them, the kids don't know you're teaching them," he said.

"I've had, I don't know, how many players come back 10, 15 years after I coached them and say, 'I finally got it. Thank you very much for all you've done.'"

Eberhardt says Goulet's departure has cast a pall over B.C.'s high school basketball coaching community.

"The big concern is, we're all volunteers," he said. "A lot of us are teachers but even so, our coaching is a volunteer activity. If something like this can happen to somebody of the stature of Rich Goulet, it

can happen to anybody.”

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