

# Above Paur

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Dave Paur

Forty years coaching 1,560 games, with 26 of those years spent at Utah State University Eastern and Dave Paur said if he had the chance, he would do it again. "Absolutely, if I had to do it all over again I would; guess I'm nuts."

"Coaching women is the best thing that ever happened to me," he said. "I wouldn't trade it for most division 1 jobs in the country. I loved coaching women."

Paur started his career at the College of Eastern Utah as a student-athlete from 1969-71, playing basketball for coach

Curt Jenson. "I had just got back from three years in the army and one in Vietnam. My brother Steve was playing here so I moved from Salt Lake to Price as a walk-on. By winter quarter, coach offered me a scholarship.

"That summer I practiced with the University of Utah basketball players working on my game," he said. "I came back to CEU as a much-improved player." His teammates included Chuck Anderson, Sid Hansen, Jerry Carlson, Dave Tolman, Jimmy Horton, Brad Monks, Clint Anderson, Kohn Smith and his brother Steve.

"I was named all-conference my second year while averaging 15-pointsper game, 8.3 rebounds and shooting 78 percent from the foul line. If there was a three-point line then, I would have averaged 21 points per game because most of my shots were from the perimeter.

"I wasn't much of a student in high school or college," he said. "And I sure in the heck wasn't doing well in college. Edith Allred was my English teacher and she called me in one day and changed my attitude about education.

"She asked me if I was going into education and I nodded yes. She told me I had to do better in classes and take a speech class from Neil Warren.

"I forgot to take a midterm from another English teacher, Frank Postma. He found me on campus and made me take the midterm.

"Jay Andrus taught music and that's where my love for classical music began. Each of these teachers pushed me in the right direction. They cared for me and that's why I spent 40 years in education. They taught me the importance of study, how to study and how to be a good student. I really did not know how to study until I came to CEU.

"I cannot tell you how awesome the faculty were and still are at Eastern. They started me on this journey, and 40 years later, I still think they are the best faculty anywhere," he said.

After CEU, Paur continued playing basketball at Southern Utah University where he was recently inducted to its Hall of Fame. "SUU has produced more coaches who have won state championships than any other college or university. It's referred to as a coaching factory. Some of the best coaches in Utah are from SUU," he said. After graduation, Paur moved back to SLC and earned his master's degree from the University of Utah. His first teaching/coaching job was at North Layton Jr. High and

then East Carbon High. California beckoned and he signed a contract to teach, plus coach football and men's basketball at Chowchilla High. After a few years he moved to the collegiate level where he coached men's basketball and track at Kings River College.

"My wife is from Price and we had a subscription to the Sun Advocate," he said. "She read an advertisement for a women's basketball coach position at CEU and told me I had to apply. Bob Taniguchi was the A.D. and when I interviewed, he asked me if I could also coach the baseball team. He liked that I had A.D. experience. I was offered and accepted the job. My first contract was in 1989."

"I had helped coach girls at Chowchilla High School on playing defense, but that was it. Now as I look back, my favorite jobs have been coaching women. They are like sponges that take in everything you tell them. They want to be good and succeed in the game."

He figured he coached 156 players in his career at Eastern and 77 of those athletes celebrated his retirement in Midvale, Utah, on Aug. 1 while another 20 sent him emails wishing they were there.

His former players created a Facebook page, "Coach Paur's Crew," where they posted and tagged hundreds of photos of his players at CEU and Eastern. They posted videos and photos of the party as well as photos of each team he coached. They wrote how much they loved the man, his nuances and their respect for him. They talked about the long bus rides, his dog Porter and ordering T-shirts to commemorate his retirement party.

They even invited members of the eight baseball teams he coached and 15 of his former players came to the reunion.

With 40 years of coaching under his belt, Paur said his No. 1 mentor, hands down, is John Wooden who coached 10 national championships while at UCLA. "John spent 20 minutes of a clinic talking one-on-one with three of us coaches," he said. "I have read all of his books and likes how he deals with people; he never swore or raised his voice. I tried to run his high-post offense, but never was successful at it."

One of his favorite weekends was in 2015 in the final games of the season in Coeur d'Alene and Twin Falls, Idaho. "We beat College of Southern Idaho and North Idaho on the road; we have never done that before," he said.

When he watches the basketball games now, he misses not having a relationship with the players. "Don't get me wrong, the games are good, but I miss knowing the tightness and comradery of each team," he said.

Paur coached great athletes over the years and fondly remembers "Angela Ross, point guard, third-team All American; Lindsey Allen, power forward; SWAC MVP, Brittney Hawks, best post player ever and second-team All American; Chelsie Warburton, guard, best shooter I have ever seen; and Pricilla Santos, guard, led the nation in scoring, averaging 30 points per game plus named first-team All American," he said.

When he says he has been tight with all his teams, he admits attending 90 percent of their wedding receptions. "If one of my team members gets married in Utah, Idaho or Arizona and invites me, I go," he said.

He also promised one of his players, Brazilian-born Santos, that he would attend her graduation from William Woods University in Fulton, Missouri. In May 2014, Paur attended her bachelor's degree graduation exercises. She has since graduated with her master's degree from Marshall University and maintained her 4.0 GPA throughout all her higher education.

Paur couldn't stay retired full time and so he came back to Eastern on a part-time basis to manage the BDAC two days a week and put on his athletic director hat the other two days this past fall. He thinks he has another year of work in him at Eastern.

Now that he is not tied to the recruiting road, he and his brother Steve travel every summer to places like Washington DC, New York, Nauvoo, Missouri and Israel. They are still discussing where their next adventure will be.

"I have received several awards throughout my career, but nothing is better than remembering the relationships I have built with all of my teams," he said. "My life has been truly blessed."

~ Susan Polster