No Ordinary Joe

He was an extraordinary coach with an ordinary first name. And yet what stood out most about Joe Bochicchio wasn’t his incredible record or his numerous personal accomplishments, but, rather, his humility, compassion and dignity. His death on July 24 at the age of 61 after a brief illness saddened The University of Scranton community and beyond.

Bochicchio arrived on campus as a part-time coach in 1984, just one year after the program was founded, and quietly went about his business building the program into a national powerhouse. He won 298 matches, including 15 Middle Atlantic/Freedom Conference titles and 11 NCAA Division III tournament berths, where three of the teams – 1987, 2001, 2003 – advanced to the quarterfinals.

Bochicchio is currently fifth in victories in NCAA Division III women’s soccer history. Records, however, meant little to him. He was more concerned that his players develop a love and understanding of the game and that they graduate and move on to become even better people.

First and foremost, he was a loving husband to his wife, Sandy, and a loving father to his sons, Matt, a senior at The Pennsylvania State University, and Jeff, currently a sophomore forward on the men’s soccer team at Scranton.

Next, he was an educator, which he developed during his 30-year tenure as a certified health and physical education teacher in the Scranton School District. There, he continued his love of athletics by coaching baseball, football and wrestling on the junior high and high school level. Even after his retirement from teaching in 1998, he remained a staunch supporter of education by serving on the North Pocono School Board.

Deep down inside, Joe was a humanitarian. He made everyone feel important, was able to laugh at himself, and impacted the people around him in his quiet, unassuming ways.

This Joe was anything but ordinary. This Joe was something special.

Joe Bochicchio and former women’s soccer all-American Monica (Davidson) Nicholas ’91 were inducted into the University’s Wall of Fame in February 2003. He was the first one to credit his players for the enormous success he enjoyed as a head coach.

He coached seven all-Americans, and eight of his former players are now members of the Wall of Fame.

Brooke Hinkley has returned to the volleyball team this fall after recuperating from a broken back suffered in an automobile accident last October. The senior from Hallstead has been an inspirational leader, both on and off the court, for the Royals of Head Coach Jud Holdredge.
Toby Lovecchio ’85, director of athletics, served as interim women's soccer coach for the 2007 season. He played soccer for the Royals of then Head Coach and current Associate Director of Athletics Steve Klingman from 1982 through 1984. A two-time all-Middle Atlantic Conference selection during his standout career as a member of the men's cross-country team, he is currently attending the New York University School of Medicine. Klingman was selected Conference All-Star and the Conference's Most Valuable Player in 1984.

Jackie Messantonio ’07 was named all-regional for the fourth straight year by the Intercollegiate Women’s Lacrosse Coaches Association (IWLCA) in May. She was one of 211 student-athletes selected from seven regions nationwide. Messantonio finished her career second all-time in Scranton history with 217 goals.

Jim O'Connor of njsportpics.com

John Mercuri ’07 (left) and Taryn Mellody ’07 (right) were awarded prestigious NCAA postgraduate scholarships during the recently completed academic year. Mercuri, a three-time Academic All-American selection during his standout career as a member of the men’s cross-country team, is currently attending the New York University School of Medicine. Mellody, a three-time All-American in women’s basketball and member of two NCAA Final Four teams, is pursuing her master’s degree in physical therapy at The University of Scranton.

Tim Logan, a senior forward on the men’s soccer team, scored the match-winning goal in the Royals’ 2-1 victory in overtime against the United States Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York, on Saturday, September 15, in the first-ever intercollegiate contest between two league opponents in Landmark Conference history.

Bill Johnson for billjohnsonphotos.com

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