

TAG CHRISTENSON
HEAD FOOTBALL COACH, 1955-1960

In 1955, the Mercer Island High School was completed and opened its doors for the Class of '58 sophomores. Mercer Island's first Head Football Coach was Tag Christenson. Coach Christenson led the Islanders from 1955-1960 and compiled a record of 26 wins, 23 losses, and 5 ties. Incredibly, Mercer Island was able to field a varsity team of sophomores in 1955. That first year MI went 6-2. After two non-conference wins over Federal Way and Issaquah, the undefeated MIHS swamped Tahoma, 41-0 for its first Lakeside League Victory in 1955.



Head coach Tag Christensen

STEVE JAMES
MI HEAD FOOTBALL COACH, 1961-1965

Steve James came to Mercer Island in 1960 as an assistant football coach and taught social studies. In 1961, James became the Head Coach for Mercer Island for the next four years. From 1961-1965, Coach James led the Islanders to a record of 26 wins, 15 losses, and 4 ties.



Coach James

Prior to coming to Mercer Island, Coach James taught and coached at South Kitsap High School in Port Orchard. Unfortunately, Coach James died in 1966. In the classroom or on the field, Steve James knew how to properly motivate his students and achieve results. As a football coach, he instilled in his team the feeling of true sportsmanship and impressed upon every individual the importance of fair play.

DAVE ENSLOW
MI HEAD FOOTBALL COACH, 1966-1972

Dave Enslow was the Head Coach at Mercer Island from 1966-1972. In those years, Coach Enslow amassed a record of 40 wins, 29 losses, and one tie. In 1971, Enslow led the Islanders to a 9-1 record and Mercer Island's first KingCo Championship. In 1972, after the championship season, Enslow was named "Coach of the Year" by the Washington State Coach's Association. Enslow also served at the School District Athletic Director and wrestling coach. Coach Enslow commented on the 1971 team and felt the team "was underrated, and the coach overrated."



Enslow was a three sport letterman at Lake Washington High School and graduated in 1956. Dave was named to the high school all-state football team, was an all-conference choice in baseball, and won third place in the Washington State prep wrestling tournament.

Enslow played on the University of Washington Varsity teams in 1957, 1959, and 1960. Enslow graduated from the University of Washington where he was the captain of the wrestling team and a tackle on two UW Rose Bowl winning teams in 1959 and 1960. Enslow became the head wrestling coach at the University and was a graduate assistant on the football coaching staff in 1962.

From the University of Washington, Enslow became the Head Coach at East Bremerton High School for four years where he guided the team to the first football championship in its history. Enslow was also the head wrestling coach for East Bremerton.

GENE YERABEK MI HEAD FOOTBALL COACH, 1973-1978

Gene Yerabek, was the Head Football Coach at Mercer Island from 1973-1978 with a record of 39 wins, 15 losses, and no ties over the six years. In his first year of coaching at Mercer Island, Yerabek led the Islanders to the Kingco Conference championship and was named “Coach of the Year” by the King County Coaches’ Association.



Oh, I don't believe-it . . . Coach Gene Yerabek

Heading the Islanders during their winning season was a thrilling experience for Coach Yerabek - one he said wouldn't have been possible without the excellent support of his coaching staff.

Yerabek played football for O’Dea High School. He attended Western Washington State College, Olympic College, and graduated from Seattle University in 1968 with a bachelor’s degree in education. Yerbek spent eight years with the King County Sheriff’s Department as a deputy sheriff and taught at St. Martin’s High School in Lacey for two years where he was also head football coach.

RICHARD “DICK” NICHOLL MI HEAD FOOTBALL COACH, 1979-2006

In 1956, Dick Nicholl and his brother formed one of seven groups of brothers on the Bothell High School football team. You couldn't pick up a newspaper during football season without reading the name “Dick Nicholl” in the high school sports section. Nicholl played football, track and field, and basketball at Bothell High before playing running back for the Huskies. Dick was an All-Conference running back in



football. He placed third in the state in shot put at 54 feet, 11 inches and was considered by some to be the best male athlete in school history at Bothell. Dick graduated from Bothell High School in 1957.

After high school, Dick received a football scholarship to University of Washington. He was the starting halfback for the Huskies by his sophomore year but during spring ball of 1959 he sustained a shoulder separation that required major surgery and a half-body cast. To make matters worse, within a week he was back in the hospital for an emergency appendectomy. He was physically unable to return to football in the fall, so he left the UW but later attended school at Western Washington University where he led team in rushing in 1963 and was an All-Evergreen Conference selection. Nicholl also set the WWU record in shot put (college weight) at 49-11 $\frac{3}{4}$.

From 1958-60, Nicholl played with "The Galaxies," one of the Great Bands of the Pacific Northwest. Members included Bob Christensen (Lead Guitar), Jim Kenard (Drums), Larry Kenard (Tenor Saxophone, Clarinet), Larry Oakland (Piano), and Dick Nicholl (Guitar and Lead Vocals). The Galaxies cut only one record, a 45 RPM with two songs ("You're a Little Doll" and "The Ache in My Heart") featuring singing by Nicholl.

After graduating with a degree in Spanish literature at WWU, Dick joined the Peace Corps and volunteered in Venezuela for two years. He was physical education instructor at a teacher's college and had the opportunity to be the translator for the USA Olympic track team touring Venezuela.

In 1966, Nicholl returned to the U.S. and began his teaching and coaching career as a Spanish teacher at Centralia High School and as the school's head track coach and assistant football coach. In 1970, Dick became Head Football Coach where his teams won two Black Hills Conference Championships.

In 1973, he arrived at Mercer Island as a Spanish teacher and an assistant coach in football and track. Nicholl took over for Gene Yerabek in 1979 as head coach until he retired from being the head football job at Mercer Island High School in 2006. Nicholl taught Spanish in high school for 34 years, coached track for 20 years, helped as an assistant wrestling coach for 5 years, and coached high-school football for 40 years!

Dick's greatest contribution and legacy could be measured in the over 1,000 young men that have played football for Coach Nicholl at Mercer Island and Centralia High Schools from 1970-2006. Dick Nicholl will tell you that "Mercer Island Football is not about Dick Nicholl, it's about the players that played."

Nicholl has a 177-113-2 record in 31 seasons as a head coach at Centralia and Mercer Island high schools. He is 158-104 at Mercer Island. At retirement, Dick was tied for the KingCo League's All-Time Winningest Coach!



Family

- Married to Linda for 41 years
- 3 children
- 6 grand children

Teaching Career

Spanish teacher for 34 years

Football Coaching Biography and Record

Assistant Coach, Centralia High School	1967-1969		
Head Coach, Centralia High School	1970-1972		
Assistant Coach, Mercer Island High School	1973-1978		
Head Coach, Mercer Island High School	1979-2006		
Record at Centralia High School	19 wins	9 losses	2 ties
Record at Mercer Island High School	158 wins	104 losses	0 ties
Total Win/Loss Record	177 wins	113 losses	2 ties

- 40 seasons coaching football
- 3 seasons as head coach Centralia H.S.
- 28 seasons as head coach Mercer Island H.S.
- 292 total games as head coach
- KingCo Coach of the Year: 4 seasons (most recently 2003)
- Seattle Seahawks Coach of the Week - 1996
- State District 2 Coach of the Year - 2003
- National Football Foundation KingCo 3A Coach of the Year – 2003
- Inducted into Washington State Football Coaches Hall of Fame - 2005
- East/West All Star Game: Assistant 1986, Head West Coach 2004
- Currently tied with Frank Naish of Inglemoor H.S. (4A) with most wins in history of KingCo League
- Member of Board of Directors of the National Football Foundation
- Inducted to the Coaches' Wall of Honor - Pro Athletes Outreach

Track Coaching Biography

- 12 yrs. As head track coach (7 @ Centralia and 5 @ Mercer Island)
- 2nd in state in 1976 (Mercer Island)

WILLIAM “BILL” HEGLAR (2007)

William “Bill” Heglár will enter his 41st year of coaching and teaching in 2007, all but one as a head coach. Coach Heglár has coached at nine different schools and most recently at Decatur High School in Federal Way.

In 2005, Coach Heglár was inducted into the Washington State Football Coaches Hall of Fame and also received the Washington State Coaches Association Level III Coaching Milestone Award for having over 150 wins.



From 2003-2006, Bill was the Head Coach at Decatur High School. In 2003, he was the South Puget Sounds League Coach of the Year and the team won the league title for the first time in school history.

In 2000, Heglar was the Head Coach for the East-West All State Game. From 1994-1999, Heglar coached at Bellevue High School where they won three KingCo Championships and had two playoff appearances. In 1998, Coach Heglar received the King County and District 2 Coach of the Year award. In 1995, he was the Eastside Coach of the Year and was Assistant Coach for the East-West All State Game.

Coach Heglar has a strong history of rebuilding football programs and is very proud that he has increased player turnout in every school he has coached.

Heglar grew up in the tiny town of St. John in Whitman County located in the south eastern corner of Washington. He played football and baseball in high school. He attended Eastern Washington University where he played football and baseball for two years, was on the swim team for four years, and received his B.A. in Education.