

By Grant Granger

A winning formula on the ball diamond is to put up crooked numbers on the scoreboard. Well, Mike Renney's 24 seasons as head coach of the Simon Fraser University women's softball team is littered with crooked numbers.

Check out his career linescore:



- Renney coached the Clan in more than 1,000 games accumulating a 640-368 win loss record, a winning percentage of 63.4%.
- His SFU teams won four NAIA titles (1999, 2003, 2005 and 2010).
- Twenty of his athletes have represented Canada on the senior national team at world championships, Pan American Games and Olympic Games.
- Renney coached with Canada at three Olympics serving as an assistant in 1996 in Atlanta and at the 2000 Games in Sydney, Australia before being the head coach at the 2004 Summer Games in Athens where Canada finished fifth.
- The 2004 Olympic team's roster included five former SFU players.
- Named National Fastpitch Coaches Association (U.S.) coach of the year three times.
- Named NAIA softball coach of the year four times.
- Named Sport BC coach of the year in 2003.

• Inducted into the Softball BC Hall of Fame in 2012 and the NAIA Hall of Fame in 2014. "We legitimized the sport at the university level in Canada," says Renney, who will be inducted into the Burnaby Sports Hall of Fame on Feb. 28. "Everybody knows the football program, the basketball programs of the world and the wrestling program. We were the new kids on the block, and if anything we legitimized ourselves amongst the other programs [at SFU]."

Before taking over the Clan, Renney learned from many managing mentors like Adrian Lavigne, an inductee into the Burnaby Sports Hall of Fame last year who led numerous senior women's teams to provincial, national and international titles.

"Growing up in the Lower Mainland and having an opportunity to coach in Canada was a dream come true," says Renney, who resides on Burnaby Mountain at UniverCity. "I used a lot of tactics that I would use at a higher level and challenge them to meet that level. You always want to coach them to play at a higher level than they're at."

There are a lot of fond memories for the Clan coach. He points out with pride that he has coached well over 100 athletes at SFU who have moved on to go to law school, become doctors and even some coaches amongst many professions and avocations.

Renney, who turned over the program to new head coach Michelle Peters this past year, was also involved in SFU building a softball stadium on campus, Beedie Field, that has help attract many top Canadian women softball players to the school's program.

"Twenty-four years is a long time, your goals change and your motivation changes. It was a good time [to leave] with the energy that I had," says Renney.

He has served as a master course coaching instructor, is an international clinician and has been a consultant to Softball Canada on its technical manual revisions. Renney remains involved in the sport holding clinics recently in places like The Netherlands and Costa Rica. "I haven't hung up my spikes so to speak and I'm willing to share my knowledge."

(Grant Granger is chair of the Burnaby Sports Hall of Fame)

• *The 18th annual Burnaby Sports Hall of Fame banquet will be held at the Metrotown Firefighters club banquet hall, 6515 Bonsor Ave., Burnaby, on Thursday, Feb 28 (reception 6 p.m., dinner 7 p.m.) Tickets are available at tickets09@shaw.ca or by phoning Rosemary at 604-436-1672.*