

||||||| YOUTH BASEBALL |||||



CHRIS KNIGHT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mountville head coach Bob Sauders watches as his team takes on Penn Manor in a 12U play-in game for the LNP Tournament at Manor Middle School on Tuesday.

# LEAVE A LEGACY

*Mountville coach Bob Sauders celebrates 1,000th win, decades of memories*

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Bob Sauders and his wife Debbie have transformed what was once one of their children's bedrooms into a Mountville youth baseball museum.

Trophies, bats, baseballs, hats and ribbons decorate the walls and shelves, each with a story craving to be told.

The newest addition to the room? A framed baseball with "1,000th career win" etched on the nameplate.

A milestone of that magnitude is seldom heard of in youth baseball. Yet, Sauders surpassed the number last

month.

However, he wants to make one thing abundantly clear.

"The kids," Sauders said, "do all of the work."

And to him, the trophy room is about so much more than the trophies. It is a collection of memories, moments, accomplishments. It is an everyday reminder of the legacy that Sauders and his teams have established.

Sauders has been coaching for Mountville since 1988, but had been doing instructional work as early as 1985.

He has exclusively coached at the Midget-Midget — 12U — level for the Mountville Indians since his debut season some 34 years ago.

"The 11-12 age group is a transitional age. It's a good age, a fun age. They still listen to you, for the most part," Sauders said with a laugh.

"It is amazing to see the transformation between 11 and 12."

Sauders likes to carry three or four 11-year-olds on his team each season. The experience they gain helps prepare them for the following season.

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# Sauders: *Mountville coach leaves a legacy*

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"They could be wide-eyed when they're 11 and make all their mistakes," he said, "but as soon as the season's over you just see the transformation over the fall and now they're the big kids."

Sauders works hard to implement a feeling of community for all his teams. He credits wife Debbie with organizing a team picnic at the end of each season, something that has become a tradition for every team he's coached.

At each picnic, they share their Mountville baseball room with the team.

"Our goal was to have them see what they're a part of," said Debbie Sauders, who played a big part in the creation of the room.

The idea of legacy and being a part of it is substantial. The memories made and moments had bring back former players to support the Indians.

Steve Remley, the new Lancaster Catholic baseball head coach, played for Sauders on his 2003 team, which went undefeated with a jaw-dropping mark of 51-0. Remley came out to one of Mountville's recent playoff games and was introduced to the team.

"I introduced them to him, told them what team he was on," Sauders said. "They asked him all kinds of questions and he stood there and answered each one. It was great."

Sauders is well aware that none of the team's success would be possible without the backing of his family, Mountville Youth Association, the kids and the par-



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ents.

"If you didn't have the support of your family, you wouldn't be doing this," he said.

Sauders has also had a plethora of coaching support over his career, but Jerry Bradley is one coach who has been with him long-term. Bradley was the Mountville pitching coach for about 15 of the 34 years that Sauders has been coaching, and has been his right hand man for about half of his coaching career.

One of the many highlights in Sauders' coaching career is that legend-

ary 2003 Mountville team, which, won what was then known as the New Era Tournament, but is known today as the LNP Tournament.

That team then went to play in a tournament in Cooperstown, New York, home of the Baseball Hall of Fame. The goal was to celebrate a flawless season, face new competition and have fun.

The Indians ended up winning the whole thing.

Sauders echoed the importance of the LNP Tournament for both his own team and the surrounding teams in Lancaster County.

"The LNP Tournament is our World Series," Sauders said. "That's against all your peers. That's against the rest of the teams in the county. So it's important."

He is incredibly familiar with the event, his teams having won nine titles during his tenure, including three straight from 2002-04. The Indians last hoisted the trophy in 2018.

Sauders and the 2021 Indians will look to add another trophy to the Mountville baseball room as they open LNP Tournament Midget-Midget play at 6 Monday night at Mount Joy's Kunkle Field.