



Saint Viator Lacrosse Coach Nets Prestigious State Honor

June 3, 2011



Coach Bill Sanford (standing center) says a prayer with the lacrosse team before the game.

Saint Viator Lacrosse Coach Bill Sanford earned “Coach of the Year” honors by the Illinois High School Lacrosse Association, which is the governing body of the sport of lacrosse in Illinois.

“The association confers this recognition on only one coach throughout the state of Illinois,” said the Rev. Robert M. Egan, C.S.V., president. “It’s a highly deserved honor for Bill, and it reflects positively on the entire Saint Viator lacrosse program.”

Sanford was selected by coaches in the league, who voted on the award. They also determined seeding for the two state tournament brackets and to determine all-conference, all-state, and All-American honors.

“It is a quite an honor,” says Sanford, who directs student recruitment for Saint Viator. “I want to thank all the kids I’ve coached at Saint Viator over the years for pushing me to get better each year and for believing in the program.”

Last week, Sanford led the Lions to the semifinals of the state championships, before they bowed out at the hands of the state’s No. 1 ranked team, Loyola Academy.

Their final four appearance came after a 15-1 finish in their IHSLA regular season, and a 7-0 record in the Catholic League en route to earning the conference championship.

They entered the state tournament ranked No. 4 in the LaxPower rankings.

Saint Viator officials began fielding lacrosse as a club team in 2003, with 40 players. They now have 90 in the program, and it is considered a full-fledged sport, with the hope that official IHSA recognition will come next year.

Athletic Director Tim Carlson credits Sanford with bringing the lacrosse program to the next level.

“He has provided a clear vision and direction for the program,” Carlson says. “You can see the passion he has for the game and most importantly for working with his student athletes to make them not only better players, but better people as well.”

Sanford grew up playing lacrosse in his native New Jersey. He completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Dayton before earning a master’s degree in education at the University of Notre Dame.

Last year, the Lions joined the new Catholic League Lacrosse Conference, playing many of their rivals from the East Suburban Catholic Conference and finishing second. Under Sanford’s leadership, they advanced to the round of 16 last year in state tournament play and this year into the semi-finals among some the state’s elite programs.