

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Mary Margaret (Peg) Kopec

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Sports Stories - IHSA Oral History project

Interview # SIH-A-L-2017-020

Mary Margaret (Peg) Kopec, the St. Francis High School volleyball coach whose teams won twelve championships, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Sports Stories – Illinois High School Association Oral History project*.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Apr 10, 2017 Location: St. Francis College Prep High School, Wheaton, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:57 / 1.95 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on June 23, 2017.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Mary Margaret (Peg) Kopec, Sports Stories–IHSA, SIH-A-L-2017-020

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Mary Margaret (Peg) Kopec was born on January 22, 1949 in Rockford, Illinois. She grew up in the Rockford area and graduated from Harlem (Loves Park) High School in 1967, during an era when the Girls Athletic Association (GAA) dominated activities for girls. Peg attended Northern Illinois University, majoring in physical education, and graduated in 1971. She started a teaching career at Rochelle Township High School, where she coached tennis and cheerleading. Moving to the western suburbs, Peg taught at St. Francis High School in Wheaton, Illinois, where she stayed until 2015. Although retiring from coaching, Peg continued to teach physical education and is also involved with the alumni advanced fund raising efforts.

Peg coached tennis, track, cheerleading, badminton, and volleyball while at St. Francis. However, it is her success in volleyball which is most noted. Her teams won twelve state championships including four in a row. Peg's volleyball career included over 1248 wins, the fifth most in National Federation of High Schools Association volleyball history (NFHS). Peg's St. Francis teams won eighty-three percent of their matches and qualified twenty times for the state finals. Her teams won thirty matches or more over thirty seasons and had a 43-9 record in state finals play. Peg has been recognized by many groups, including the Chicago Sky Title IX team of 2012, the NFHS Hall of Fame, and the Illinois Coaches Hall of Fame. Peg became noted for her motivational techniques. She helped start the concept of Volley for the Cure which led to other high school sports adopting the pink theme for cancer awareness and funding. She also has served on the IHSA volleyball and sportsmanship advisory committees.

This interview covers Kopec's involvement with the IHSA through her experiences as a high school volleyball coach at St. Francis High School. She talks about developing a strong volleyball program following the passage of Title IX in 1972, which expanded the opportunities for girls' sports. Peg discussed motivational techniques used for team bonding, developing a family atmosphere for the volleyball program, building a strong feeder program, and creating a winning tradition. She also discussed major volleyball rule changes, the impact of the non-boundary multiplier, and the way technology improved coaching. Also covered was the creation of Volley For the Cure, which led other sports to develop cancer awareness programs.

Subject Headings/Key Words: volleyball coaching for Illinois high school girls; Illinois High School Association; Impact of Title IX on Illinois girls' sports; St. Francis High School; motivational techniques for volleyball players; Volley For the Cure; volleyball rules changes; relationship of outside clubs to high school volleyball teams

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