

Smooth Dribbler – A Teacher Profile of Tony Rice

By Gerry Brach, Brooks secondary School Counsellor



After 29 years of dedicated teaching, Tony Rice is still passionate about his job. It was a natural progression for Tony to become a high-school P.E. teacher as he loved instructing soccer at numerous camps and schools from an early age. “Working with high-school students was a lot of fun then and now because they are for the most part, young adults.”

Tony started his university career at Malaspina College in Nanaimo in 1987, then transferred to U Vic two years later where he completed his Bachelor of Education Degree with a specialty in P.E. and Biology. He began his teaching career in Cranbrook, but four years later the allure of a P.E./Math position brought him to Powell River in September 1996. Originally from Nanaimo, Tony was happy to return to the West Coast. During his 25 years of

teaching in Powell River, the majority of his time has been spent at Brooks Secondary in the P.E. department. In 2006, Tony was looking for a way to get more students involved with physical activity so he developed soccer skills and personal fitness programs. Both programs have flourished over the years and continue to be popular electives today. Tony describes this current COVID year as being OK, but really misses the coaching and travelling aspect of high school sports. “Both students and teachers are finding ways of coping with a difficult situation, and are trying to make the best of it.” Tony feels that his approach to teaching has changed greatly over the years. “I am more patient in working with students now and don’t feel the need to prove myself or be the center of attention.”

During COVID personal fitness has become a huge part of Tony’s life. Since not being able to play soccer, he has channeled his energy into running and fitness training. Tony runs six times per week and also works out three times a week in the Brooks fitness room. Tony recently celebrated his completing a virtual half-marathon at Inland Lake and reports that he is currently in the best physical condition he has been in for the past 20 years! Tony started playing soccer at 5, and before COVID struck was still playing competitively at the Men’s Masters Level. He credits his father for coaching him for many years and for being a positive influence in his life. “My father coached me when I was 5 years old until I was in Grade 12. He taught me that hard work always trumps talent or ability.” Tony also credits Toni Marciniak as someone who taught him a lot about developing good relationships with students and staff. “Toni was a great mentor and friend to me.”

Tony’s advice to students interested in developing their athletic talents is “Don’t let other people limit your goals. You need to believe in yourself and to have a strong work ethic. Talent can take care of itself”. You don’t need to be the best, just be your best.”

Solid advice from a smooth dribbler!