



Highland High School rugby coach Larry Gelwix celebrates as his team scores during his final game as coach in 2011.

Highland High coaching great Gelwix headed to U.S. Rugby Hall of Fame

His teams went 418-10 and won 20 national championships in his 36 years at the helm.

By ANDREA URBAN | FOX 13

Many know him as the "Getaway Guru," but many more know him as Coach.

Larry Gelwix was the head coach of the Highland High School varsity rugby team for 36 years.

"I told the school I'd teach one year and then I just fell in love with the sport," said Gelwix. "This was the 1975-76 school year, and you know I thought, 'Every young man deserves to play rugby.' So we organized a team, the first high school rugby team in Utah."

Decades later, Gelwix will be inducted into the U.S. Rugby Hall of Fame this summer.

Under Gelwix, Highland had a varsity record of 418 wins and 10 losses, including 20 national championships in 36 years. NFL players like Haloti Ngata, Stewart Bradley and even University of Utah defensive coordinator Morgan Scalley came through the Highland rugby program.

"I have never had a player with the drive to win like Morgan Scalley," said Gelwix. "In 1998, there was a sanctioned world high school tournament, and we represented the United States. Morgan catches it on the burst, he makes a dive and scores it, we win the game 25-24 with no time remaining, and that was a great memory."

That's one of many memories that led to Gelwix getting a special phone call 13 years after his retirement.

"I got a phone call from U.S. Rugby Foundation advising me that I'm being inducted into the Hall of Fame, and I literally teared up."

It's an award that can be celebrated through decades.

"For me, it's a shared award with over 3,000 boys' names that in my heart will always be on that Hall of Fame," Gelwix said.

The Hall of Fame ceremony will take place on July 13 in Washington, D.C.

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LARRY GELWIX | Longtime Highland High coach, on being inducted into the U.S. Rugby Hall of Fame this summer

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