

# Knights girls basketball coach turns to family

By Brad Hartmann  
HERALD CONTRIBUTOR

Reed Tyriver's decision to step down as Lourdes Academy girls basketball coach came down to one word: family.

"It was a very tough decision. I have a son that is going to be 2 and a 4-year-old daughter. My wife works full time and she has sacrificed all these years to allow me to coach. I felt it was necessary to be more of a dad," Tyriver said. "If I am going to coach it's going to be 100 percent and not 75 or 80. I just didn't think I could do that anymore and that wouldn't be fair to the kids."



**Tyriver**

In Tyriver's five years at the helm he has guided the Knights to a 98-25 record along with an impressive 70-4 mark in the Trailways conference that

captured four conference crowns.

"He was a major part of the success of the girls basketball program. He has put his heart and soul into that program," Lourdes activities director Kevin Wopat said. "That is what you want to see every coach do and he was fully invested. He is a guy that we were lucky to have."

The 2018-2019 season didn't start out the way Tyriver expected as the Knights dealt with some early adversity of a 1-5 start, but said he was extremely proud on how his team responded with an eight-game winning streak to finish the year 14-9 and advanced to the WIAA Division 4 Regional finals before a close 62-60 loss to Mishicot.

"I broke down in front of the girls when we almost upset Mishicot as the ninth seed and they were the one. It took me a good five or 10 minutes as I was trying to talk to them. I didn't tell them at that time I was stepping down," Tyriver said.

He knew the most difficult group to talk to would be the incoming freshmen. This past year Tyriver's wife, Kelly, coached the eighth-grade squad and Reed taught them inside the classroom, but once he told his team his decision they all understood his reasoning.

"I was pretty devastated," Lourdes junior Raechel Russo said. "He is more than a coach to me. He is like family to me. I am happy for him but I am really going to miss him."

"I never had a bond with a coach as I did with him. He has a great sense of humor. He has this phrase — peachy keen — and it makes us laugh. He knows what to say to make you happy."

Senior standout Alexis Rolph credits Tyriver for helping her find her confidence and developing her into this year's 2019 WIAA Scholar/Athlete award winner.

"My freshman year I was really scared to come and play with the juniors and seniors at the time. He came to me and said you don't have to be perfect. He let me be who I am as a player," Rolph said. "Coach Tyriver was like my second dad. He was such a caring and loving guy. He is so supportive and knows a lot about the game. It is such a blessing to play for him for four years."

"He never yelled at us unless we did something really wrong and if he did we knew we had to change things because this is not what we are use to," Brooklyn Berenz, a 2016 graduate, said. "I remember there was one game we played at Oakfield where we came out and played really sloppy. He called a timeout in the first half and yelled at us that quieted the entire gym. As players we knew we really messed up. We then came together and did what he wanted us to do by passing the ball and not playing selfishly."

When asked if not winning a state championship would be one of his biggest regrets, Tyriver replied, "Yeah. That is going to be something that is always going to bug me. Just getting to state back in 2012 — we won the silver ball and had a dynamite team. It's probably not in my top five to win a state championship but, it's definitely something you want to do because you know it's that important to the kids."

Wopat said he wasn't shocked about Tyriver's announcement and respects his decision from where he was coming from.

"Honestly it happens all the time. He has been the coach for five years and if you look at the state average that might be above the state average," he said. "Hiring him was an easy choice. He was the top assistant from Ali Fett's staff. Every kid has a respect level for him. He was incredibly invested in the youth programs."

Since Tyriver's arrival in 2007 he would be considered a jack of all trades, putting his skills to the test as softball assistant coach, baseball coach, girls basketball assistant and head coach. In Tyriver's third year coaching baseball he guided the Knights to their first state appearance in school history.

He may have been teary eyed when he decided to step down but he won't rule out a possible return to the sidelines.

"Yes, I don't think I am done coaching. It wouldn't be for a while either. I could see myself five years or so down the road if something opened up, especially here at Lourdes," he said.

Assistant coach Quinn Heintz was named Tyriver's successor and is eager to start the 2019-2020 campaign.

"I've been with the program for the past three years. It's a great opportunity," Heintz said. "The program has a very rich history and tradition and it's such a great school to be a part of."