

Former Rockingham coach Bill Eutsler dies at 96

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CHERAW, S.C. — Former Rockingham High coach and Richmond Senior athletic director Bill Eutsler died Saturday at the age of 96.

Eutsler served as football coach at Rockingham from 1940 to 1941 before leaving to serve in the Navy during World War II. He returned to the sideline five years later and remained as the Rockets' coach until the school was closed in 1972.

Eutsler then transitioned to become Richmond Senior's first athletic director when it opened in the fall of 1972.

As a football coach, Eutsler posted a 226-74-14 record at Rockingham. He guided the Rockets to 13 conference championships and four state championships.

In 1963, Eutsler was selected as the North Carolina coach in the annual Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas against South Carolina. The Sandlappers won the contest 23-13. He was also picked to lead the East

team in the 1959 East-West All-Star clash.

Eutsler also served as Rockingham's baseball and basketball teams as well during his tenure.

Eutsler earned another state championship in 1956, leading the baseball team to the title over Walkertown. During his time as baseball coach, he won three conference crowns and had a 111-48 mark.

He led the Rockets' basketball team to a 104-24 record during his six years as coach.

Eutsler admitted in a 2008 interview with the Richmond County Daily Journal he didn't have the best knowledge of basketball and gave his players all the credit for the success.

"I must have had some good talent in those days because we actually played in the state playoffs a few times," he said. "I used to hate when the other coach would call timeout because I didn't know enough to tell the boys what to do. I would just tell them to pass the ball to the person in front of them."

Eutsler was inducted into the North Carolina High School Athletic Association's Hall of Fame in 1990. Seven years later, he was a member of the third

class of nominees to be inducted into the North Carolina High School Athletic Directors Association's Hall of Fame.

Eutsler joined the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame in 1992.

In 2003, Eutsler was named as one of the NCHSAA's 100 to Remember for coaches. Eutsler was honored by earning the inaugural Athletic Director of the Year award presented by the NCHSADA.

Eutsler's success wasn't limited to his time as coach at Rockingham or AD at Richmond. He was a two-sport star at Wake Forest, playing baseball and football. After graduating in 1940, Eutsler played for one season in the Washington Senators' organization.

He was inducted into Wake Forest's Hall of Fame in 1977.

A funeral service is set for 3 p.m. today at First United Methodist Church in Cheraw. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Bill Eutsler Scholarship Fund, Wingate University, Campus Box 3071, Wingate, NC 28174; the Ann Eutsler Scholarship Fund, First United Methodist Church, 117 Third St., Cheraw, SC 29520; or Hospice of Chesterfield County Inc., P.O. Box 293, Chesterfield, SC 29709.

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