

# STEPPING ASIDE



## Legendary Spencerport wrestling coach Jacoutot retires with 7 state team titles

JAMES JOHNSON | STAFF WRITER

SPENCERPORT — Preparation was one reason why Bill Jacoutot's wrestling teams at Spencerport cranked out 353 wins.

Tournament, dual meet or a normal practice, the Rangers were ready. The team dominated. Yet, even when nothing seemed broken, Jacoutot would "re-invent" the program to keep the Rangers ahead of the competition.

Jacoutot, 57, could see the day would come when he was no longer the Spencerport coach. That failed to make Wednesday, when he walked in front of the wrestlers and announced his retirement, any easier to prepare for.

"I knew today was going to be an impending doom day; I was a nervous wreck," Jacoutot said. "Emotionally, this has been beyond difficult, but I think it's for the good of the program."

"It's one of our most experienced teams that we have coming back. It would give a young coach a good chance to succeed. I know that this position can put a lot of weight on a person's shoulders."

The bulk of those expectations come from Jacoutot's 28-year legacy at Spencerport, after three seasons at Pembroke.

"He's definitely the best motivator," senior Paul Morabito said. "The way he could talk to kids, to get them to do better for themselves and others. I've never seen that, the way that he does it."

"He can relate to the wrestlers. He's been there and done that. He earns your trust. It'll definitely be different. I'm used to the way he does things."

Spencerport placed in year-end national rankings five times under Jacoutot. The

### By the numbers

Key statistics in Bill Jacoutot's career as a high school wrestling coach

- 5** Nationally ranked teams coached.
- 7** New York state team championships won.
- 10** Undefeated seasons.
- 11** State champions coached.
- 17** Section V Coach of the Year honors.
- 20** Monroe County Tournament titles.
- 21** Section V team titles.
- 28** Years as varsity coach at Spencerport.
- 58** Consecutive matches won (2006 to present).
- 114** Consecutive wins against Section V opponents (Dec. 1994 to Jan. 2005).
- 174** Consecutive wins against Monroe County opponents (1991 to present).
- 353-28-1** Record at Spencerport.
- 387-34-2** Career record.

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# Jacoutot

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Rangers have seven state titles after they were designated champions for the third consecutive year last season.

The arrival of sectionals usually has meant another trophy for Spencerport — 21 in all under Jacoutot. A total of 12 Rangers have won individual state titles, 11 of them with Jacoutot in their corner.

“He’s obviously the finest coach in Section V history,” Section V wrestling chairman Chris Bourne said.

Bourne coached against Jacoutot, then watched his two sons wrestle at Spencerport.

“His hobby was wrestling, so in terms of preparation he went above and beyond,” Bourne said. “I can’t tell you the number of times the phone would ring and he would ask to talk to Mike and Bryan, and they just left him at practice an hour before.

“He was already getting ready for the following day.”

Jacoutot was named the National High School Wrestling Coach of the Year by the National High School Coaches Association in 2008.

His original goal in the sport was to coach at the college level, after he wrestled at Madison Central in Old Bridge, N.J., then the State University of New York at Buffalo, where he qualified for the national collegiate championships.

Jacoutot was an assistant at Sweet Home, a Buffalo-area high school, before he became the Pembroke varsity coach. Pembroke was 34-6-1 under Jacoutot from 1978-81.

It was during an impressive performance by Pembroke at sectionals that successful Spencerport coach and athletic director Walt Teike chatted with Jacoutot.

Teike offered the Spencerport varsity wrestling coach position a few months later.

“I had a tenured teach-

ing position at Pembroke,” Jacoutot said. “He said, ‘I can’t guarantee you what’s going to happen in a year,’ but I had a feeling.

“It’s probably the best thing that happened in my life. I knew the place was different when I walked the halls for the first time, and that I had a big responsibility.”

Rick Suhr met the then-new Spencerport wrestling coach a short time later as a stubborn eighth-grader. By the time Suhr graduated in 1986, he and older brother John became the first two state champions Jacoutot coached at Spencerport.

“Bill fulfilled the role as my father figure from A to Z,” said Suhr, who coaches 2008 Olympic pole vaulting silver medalist Jenn Stuczynski. “I was in a divorce situation, and my father wasn’t around much.

“I’ve coached all over the world. There is no larger influence on me and my coaching as Bill. Every time, when I’m battling, it goes back to the lessons I learned in that room with Bill. It’s pulled

me out every time.”

Jacoutot also coached varsity cross country, freshman boys soccer, modified football and modified track and field at Spencerport.

After 32 years as a physical education teacher, he spent two as the dean of students at Cosgrove Middle School in Spencerport, before retiring in June. He and Pat, his wife of 33 years, have three adult children.

“It always amazes me that I can love other people’s children almost as much as my own,” Jacoutot said.

“It seems like it went so fast. I didn’t want to retire; I call it the waiting room for death. I don’t care about vacations or days off. My life was school and coaching, but this is how the door opened.”

Spencerport athletic director John Pelin said that a search for Jacoutot’s successor begins today, with a plan to introduce a candidate to the Spencerport school board on Sept. 30. □

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