



## **Charlie Bassett**

**Spring Lake**

**1942-2023**

Charlie Bassett was a star athlete at Hastings High School --- good enough to be All State Honorable Mention in football and a 1961 state champion wrestler in the 165-pound class. He didn't start playing tennis until his freshman year but worked his way up to first doubles during his junior and senior campaigns. A college course at Western Michigan in the coaching of tennis under the legendary Hap Sorensen (courts at WMU are named after Hap) made him ready to take the tennis job at Spring Lake High School during his second year of teaching.

He came into the MHSTeCA radar because three of the best players in Class B at the time were on his Spring Lake team. That got him invited to Saturday tournaments where he fell under the spell of stories told by Bob Wood and Tiger Teusink. He once said that he simply sat there during those Friday nights and listened in amazement.

Already a Girls Coach of the Year in 1980, he joined the board a year later and became the president in 1985. That's a mere four years after he first emerged and in total, he accumulated almost fifty years of service on behalf of his players, his school, the tennis coaches association and high school tennis. Consider his accomplishments:

- In 1980, Charlie received the association's Coach of the Year award for his work with the Spring Lake girls. **Given that the association began in 1977, this made him the fourth award winner in our almost 50-year history.**
- In 1992, Charlie was inducted into our Hall of Fame. **In that this was only the seventh class of the 38.**
- In 1988, Charlie had received still another Coach of the Year Award. In ensuing years, he garnered (drum roll, please) three more, one for the girls and two for the boys. That totals **five Coaches of the Year awards spanning over three decades.**
- **He was our president from 1985 to 1987, the fifth one.** There have been 19 presidents since then.
- According to the Minutes, Charlie served on the board from 1981 (ask yourself: how old were you in 1981) until 2017. That's 36 years.

- Charlie was a Charter Member of the MHSTeCA. He can be found in the very first directory which lists him as having coached for seven years. This was the 1977 directory. His last Coach of the Year Award was in 2012. **He coached for almost a half century.**

**The following comments come from -- as with Charlie -- Hall of Famers who were also presidents of the MHSTeCA:**

“When I started coaching tennis at Forest Hills Central I was lucky enough to have both Charlie Bassett and Charlie Parton to help guide me. Both were very helpful. I always enjoyed competing against their teams because they always played both fair and hard. I miss all of the coaches back in Michigan [Elliott retired to Las Vegas], but Charlie Bassett and Charlie Partin were very special to me.”  
Elliott Pearce -- Class of 1990, President: 1979-1981

“He will be remembered as one of the great ones. “He was a joy to be around.”  
Nancy Brissette -- Essexville Garber, Class of 2019, President: 2007-2009.

“Charlie and I met at one of the summer meetings and became close friends over the years. We competed in each other’s invitational tournaments for a number of years for both boys and girls. These tournaments were so much fun because our kids put each other up [in their homes] and I stayed with Charlie on the Friday nights of the Saturday tournaments. What a great time we had. It was always fun competing with Charlie because his teams were well coached and competed with integrity.”  
Bob Quinn -- Saginaw Heritage, Class of 1992, President:, 1979-1981

Charlie was always giving to the sport, to other coaches and players. I am one who benefited so much from his generosity in sharing his knowledge and opening up his tournaments for other programs. All of us who knew him were better because of it.  
Gary Ellis -- Allegan, Class of 2007, President: 1995-1997

“In the early times, he volunteered to print the Hall of Fame banquet program. For a number of years, he produced the association’s directory and developed an early scorebook. He was always at Hall of Fame Selection Committee and board meetings. In other words, he was a contributor, not just someone who collected awards. He helped the association get off to a good start and then demonstrated immense staying power.”  
Ed Waits, Class of 2007, President: 1991-1993