

<http://www.KSCBNews.net/news/index.cfm?nk=960>

ESPY Winner Coached Liberal's Gruver

Don Mayer has coached a lot of players. The 37 year head basketball coach won a record 910 games and currently coached NCAA division 2 Northern State. He has motivated his players throughout the years teaching them lessons in life and basketball. But never has he motivated more people than when he had a national audience Sunday night during the ESPY's. He received the Jimmy V Award for Perserverance after his recovery from a car crash and cancer. On September 5, Mayer was involved in a car crash that resulted in the amputation of part of his leg. He was later diagnosed with cancer. But Mayer would not be denied leading Northern State to victory January 10 for his 903rd career win breaking Bob Knight's record. He coached in a wheel chair this season.

Liberal head coach Drew Gruver played for Mayer at Northern State. Gruver said watching the ESPY's gave him a sense of pride. "It was fun to watch the ESPY's and see coach Mayer give his speech. It's something he definitely deserves. He's been a small time coach all of his life and doesn't get a lot of recognition." Gruver says Mayer's dry sense of humor was familiar. "He cracked a few jokes like he always does. He has that dry sense of humor. Listening to him brought back some memories. But when he talks, you could even tell at the ESPY's that everyone was listening. That's what I remember the most is that when he talked you listened and you wanted to do your best for him no matter what."

Gruver says Mayer paid attention to detail. He detested lay ups which even grazed the rim. He was also known to pull over the bus and have an assistant hop out to pick up an aluminum can. He used the recycled cans to raise money for the program.

Gruver is a 1998 Scott City graduate and played at Northern State for Mayer after playing in 1999 and 2000 at Garden City Community College. Gruver assisted Rod Briggs at LHS in 2005 and 2006 before assisting Chris Davis in 2007. Gruver coached the Redskins to a 19-4 record in 2008 and a 17-6 record in 2009.

Copyright KSCB News