

# Hoxie High wrestling coach retires after third successful son

By John Van Nostrand  
Colby Free Press

Kirk Baker is ready to watch wrestling, but just not at matside anymore.

Baker, who coached Hoxie High School wrestling since 1982, retired after last season and is now preparing to watch his youngest son Tyler wrestle at Colby Community College.

"Before Tyler got into high school, I thought about retiring," Baker said. "But (wife) Kelly said that would not be fair to Tyler. I still enjoyed every year."

Turns out, Tyler's high school wrestling years were great ones. He finished with three state appearances. Tyler was part of the 2003 state championship team that set state records for most points ever scored, 218.5, and most state placers with 11.

"That was good to go out on," Kirk said. "I considered retiring when Trent was a senior."

Tyler is the third of the Baker's four sons. Trent graduated in 2001 and won a state championship his senior year. Travis graduated in

1999 after two state championships.

Kirk's success at Hoxie is impressive since being named head coach in 1984. He was an assistant previously.

He coached 31 state champions and 86 placed at state. As a team under Baker, Hoxie had seven state-championships from 1990 to 2003, five second-place finishes and two third-place finishes. Baker finished with a 190-67-3 record.

During the 23 seasons at matside, Baker said how student-athletes approach wrestling has changed.

"Wrestling has been like football with how knowledgeable kids are about the sport now. Kids have improved their health, nutrition and how they cut weight," he said.

Wrestlers compete at certain weights and must maintain that weight during the season. Baker said how students kept that weight



K. Baker

years ago is not nearly as dramatic as how students keep that weight today.

"That was always one of the drawbacks," Baker said.

Baker, 48, coached dozens of wrestlers the moves to become a better wrestler. In turn, Baker said those wrestlers taught him how to handle teenagers.

"Everyone is a little bit different," he said. "You have got to know how to handle some people. With some, I could be blunt and others it was pretty intimidating. But I always tried to keep it positive."

After last season and Baker's retirement, Hoxie School Board approved Mike Porsch to replace Baker. Baker was Porsch's coach at Hoxie and had been Baker's assistant coach for 11 seasons.

"I hope I learned a lot from him," Porsch said after being named coach. "He has a lot of wrestling knowledge and know how to relate it to the kids. That was one of the strengths he brought."

In addition to Porsch, Baker thanked his wife of 27 years for the support while coaching.

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Kirk Baker  
retired Hoxie High  
wrestling coach

"If it would not have been for her, I wouldn't have coached those last years," he said. "She was so beneficial with stats and fundraisers."

Being Baker's assistant for so long, Porsch said he knew Baker's retirement was on the horizon.

"I felt it coming," Porsch said. "I know the word wouldn't be out until the season was over."

Kelly said family was the main

## Tyler Baker to wrestle at Colby Community College

Tyler Baker of Hoxie signed a letter of intent to wrestle for the Colby Community College Trojans.

Baker, who wrestled at 133 pounds in high school, is a three-time state champion.

"I am very pleased about adding Tyler to our squad," said Colby head coach Steve Lampe. "He is a fierce competitor and a proven winner. Hoxie has a great wrestling program and Tyler has been a big contributor to their success."

Kirk Baker, Tyler's dad, was the wrestling coach at Hoxie for over two decades. He retired from

coaching at the conclusion of the 2006 season.

Lampe is familiar with the Baker family.

"Kirk was on the first wrestling squad that I recruited," said Lampe. "He was a great wrestler and student athlete."

The Trojan wrestlers finished eighth in the NJCAA Championships last season. Lampe has coached 74 NJCAA All-Americans and 15 national champions.

His teams have finished in the top six in the nation eight times, and his 1999 squad won the national title.

reason why Kirk decided to retire. They are in the process of adopting a 2-year-old boy, Brandon.

"We have both felt very blessed during Kirk's career that all three

of our older boys were able to experience being individual state champions but also all were a part of at least one state championship team," Kelly said.

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