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Bohner looks back at time at Warrior Run

By John Huckaby, Staff writer

TURBOTVILLE — Wrestling coaches can sometimes be resourceful.

Take Lee Bohner, the Warrior Run High coach from 1957 to 1963.

Warrior Run, at the time, didn't have a junior high wrestling program. Bohner, a physical education teacher, knew that gymnastics and wrestling were related sports. They both need good conditioning and body control. So Bohner formed a gymnastics club at the school.

It made for a good development tool for the Defender wrestlers and it showed as Bohner, a 1951 graduate of Sunbury High, developed a solid program in the infancy of the sport at Warrior Run.

Even though he's 31 years removed from coaching, Bohner keeps ties to the area. He's visiting in the Valley for several weeks as he visits with family and friends, including a sister in Sunbury.

Bohner left Warrior Run after the 1963 season to coach at Pottstown High, a school that was just starting wrestling. His overall dual mark at Warrior Run was 40-33-1 with his best season being 1960-61 when the team was 11-1-1.



CHAMPS — The 1962 Warrior Run wrestling team pose after winning the school's first tournament title at Bloomsburg. Front, from left, George Cronrath, Ed Puslifer, Tom Cotner and Robert Simpson. Back, coach Lee Bohner, Scott Gold, Earl Wertman and Ron Michael. Photo provided.

Bohner, now 74, has fond memories of teaching and coaching at Warrior Run. He especially remembers the excellent work ethic of the youngsters in the district.

"There were so many nice guys, hard workers. It's hard to single one out. One was Marty Anspach," he said. "He had to get up and milk the cows at 5 in the morning and then ride an hour to school.

"Then he had practice after school and then had to do the farm work when he went home. All the boys at Warrior Run worked so hard."

Anspach became Warrior Run's first sectional champion in 1959.

Bohner, who lives in Venice, Fla. in retirement, said he was helped at Warrior Run by then basketball coach and athletic director John Corman.

"Sometimes you don't have basketball and wrestling coaches agreeing on much but John was a big booster of wrestling. He helped to have Warrior Run host the sectional and we got a lot of praise for how well it was organized. John helped us a lot," Bohner said.

When Bohner left to start the program at Pottstown it was a different world.

"It was day and night between Warrior Run and Pottstown. None of the kids had even seen a wrestling match, even in gym class. We started right off with a varsity program," he said.



Bohner today. Photo provided.

The first couple of years were learning situations but after three or so years, the team was contending for the championship in the Ches-Mont League, a conference of large schools in the Philadelphia suburbs.

"When I went down there, the big team was Owen J. Roberts and when we finally beat them the town started to take notice," Bohner said.

Bohner's star at Pottstown was Alray Johnson, who later wrestled at West Chester State and coached at Downingtown.

But before Bohner headed to southeastern Pennsylvania, he fashioned some high goals for coaches who followed him.

Bohner coached Warrior Run's first state finalist, Ron Michael who was second at 180 pounds to Lock Haven High's Jerry Swope.

The WR coach remembers that Michael lost by a point and that the officiating was suspect in the finals match at Penn State's Rec Hall.

"Swope was the defending champion and that probably played a bit in the outcome. The fans booed the official two or three times during the match. That happens now but didn't back then," Bohner said. "We saw a film of the match later and it was evident that Ron had won.

"But Ron took the defeat well."

Bohner, who retired from teaching in 1996, said he knew there was talent coming along at Warrior Run and that was evident in 1964 when George Cronrath won the school's first state title.

"I guess you should never regret anything in your life but I do kind of wish I would have stayed at Warrior Run," Bohner said. "The kids worked so hard."

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