

SPORTS

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Streamwood's Rosner excited to be back coaching, but has some words of caution

By: John Radtke



Streamwood girls basketball coach George Rosner is entering his 40th year of coaching but is doing so with caution. *Joe Lewnard | Staff Photographer*



Streamwood girls basketball coach George Rosner says if this shortened basketball season is going to happen, it must be done with an abundance of caution. *DAILY HERALD FILE PHOTO*

George Rosner was as excited as anyone to be back in the gym with his Streamwood girls basketball team Saturday.

But, as he enters his 40th year of coaching, the dean of area girls coaches also does so with an abundance of caution.

"It felt really good to be out there and the kids were happy to be back together. They're not seeing each other at school and their socialization has been limited so they were all excited to be together," Rosner said after his team's first official practice.

"We had the Neil Diamond music blaring and after 40 years of that, it felt like a regular Saturday morning practice."

That said, Rosner was quick to speak of some concerns he -- and many of us -- have about this shortened basketball season.

"No. 1 is that we are able to continue to play," he said, "and that we don't have something happen with us, with other schools or with the state. It would be very difficult for all of us to see what we've started taken away."

None of us anticipating the return of high school basketball wants to see a backslide. Regions are rapidly reaching Phase 4, which is needed to play games. But those metrics, as we've seen throughout the pandemic, can turn around quickly. And with the return of contact in sports it's going to be even more important for everyone to follow public health department guidelines.

A second concern Rosner spoke about, which clearly is a priority, is academics.

Learning is harder than ever for kids today. Whether they are 100 percent remote, in school, or a combination of those, find me one person involved in teaching who doesn't agree learning is tougher on kids more than ever and I'll find you apples growing on an orange tree.

And while many schools and conferences are limiting the number of basketball games they're scheduling between now and March 13, others are going gangbusters, seeking out nonconference games on top of a conference schedule that already has kids playing two or three games per week for the next five to six weeks.

"Absolutely," said Rosner, 71, who has taught since 1971 but has not been a substitute yet this school year out of an abundance of caution for his own health.

"Learning is not easy this year. That absolutely has to be a priority. Kids are having a tough time staying with their studies and we need to be cognizant of that in our scheduling of sports."

Which led us to talking about the health and safety of teenage athletes. Yes, some have been playing with their AAU teams or with pickup teams but many have not. And with not being in school, the risk of injury becomes greater than normal.

"That's a concern," Rosner agreed. "These kids have been cooped up with nothing to do and if we ask too much of them, we're also running the risk of more injuries."

And the season is about to commence.

"We're all depending on each other to be in the right places and do the right things," Rosner said. "It's a fragile situation. Between COVID, academics and injuries we have to be considerate of the kids first. It's a five-week season. Let's all give it our best to get through it."