

Canton's Baechler reaches the 200 career victory mark

26 years of coaching, 200 wins.



Canton's Tim Baechler is no stranger to personal achievements as a high school football coach, having already been inducted into not one, but two halls of fame during his career.

Now, Baechler has joined the ranks of Michigan prep football coaches with 200 victories under his belt, thanks to Canton's 54-6 victory Sept. 8 over Hartland.

In his 26th season as a head coach and his 20th with the Chiefs, Baechler continues to be consistent with his method of communication — strong and fair, but demanding.

His teams' annual records are proof that his approach works, as he has led Canton to at least eight victories in seven of the past eight seasons (the only exception being 2012, when the Chiefs went 7-2 during the regular season before losing to Plymouth in a pre-district game).

"It means I've been a head coach for 26 years; it's a long time," Baechler said during Tuesday's practice in preparation for Friday night's showdown against campus rival Salem. "But we've had a lot of success, I'm very thankful to be here. My 20th year and it's special. Not everybody can coach 26 years, I guess."

One of Baechler's longtime assistants, Bob Williams, tipped his cap to the boss for reaching the milestone.

"I think he's a master of the game. He gets it figured out," Williams said. "He will win more than he will lose. It's been great working with him."

During practice, it is interesting to see the way Baechler interacts with players following a snap — offering quick and direct takes on whether a run-through hit the mark or still needs further attention before game day. Baechler almost seems as though he is in his "classroom" out on the practice field.

"I'm a little rougher out here than I am, obviously, in the classroom," he said with a chuckle. "But they respond to it. I'm not yelling or calling anybody names, but it is an attention-getter.

"These kids, they need the constant feedback and they need me to coach hard. They expect me to coach hard and they respond."

Whether Baechler is doling out criticism or praise, players learn to stick to the task at hand, the game at hand and get down to business. He also cares about each player on his roster.

"And they know that. They respect him huge," said Williams, the offensive line coach. "They'd run through a brick wall for him. It's consistency. He just has the bar high and he consistently pushes the kids to get there."

Baechler started his career at Hudson and moved to Dexter before joining the Chiefs for the 1998 season.

The success has been pretty much non-stop for the program ever since. In 2012, Baechler was inducted into the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

Three years later, he was named to the Michigan High School Coaches Association hall, which includes those who have led teams in all sports. Also a big deal for the Plymouth resident has been having sons Brocton and Lou (a current team leader) on the Chiefs. Wife Julie also is active with the football program.

But over the years, a Baechler-coached team doesn't pull any punches or offer any surprises. It always features multiple playmakers behind a tough-as-nails offensive line, augmented by strong defense and special teams.

"It's 'the team, the team, the team,'" Baechler said. "No stars. Sometimes it's going to be the fullback, sometimes it's going to be the quarterback, sometimes it's going to be one of the halfbacks.

"We don't care, as long as we're moving the ball and scoring touchdowns." And, of course, winning games. Lots of them.

Top area coaches (career)

Baechler joins an impressive list of Michigan high school coaches to reach the 200-victory plateau. Below are some notable names from teams covered by the Observer & Eccentric. This list is available on the MHSAA website, updated through 2016.

1. Al Fracassa (Birmingham Brother Rice), 430 career wins
 2. John Herrington (Farmington Hills Harrison), 425
 3. Tom Mach (Detroit Catholic Central), 370
 4. Mike Boyd (Waterford Our Lady of the Lakes), 361
 9. Bob Lantzy (Rochester Hills Stoney Creek), 306
 21. George Porritt (Orchard Lake St. Mary's), 256
 38. Joe D'Angelo (Detroit Country Day, Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook Kingswood), 229
 40. Tom Moshimer (Salem), 219
 49. Chuck Gordon (Westland John Glenn), 211
 55. Art Paddy (West Bloomfield, O. L. St. Mary's), 202
 59. Tim Baechler* (Canton), 200
- *Unofficial ranking as of Sept. 8



Getting a point across during Tuesday's practice is veteran Canton head football coach Tim Baechler.