

The Journal Times

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Local Sports

New RYS president ready for the challenge

BY ROBB LUEHR
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Racine Youth Sports has a new president and he has big plans for the future of the organization.

Bob Evans was recently elected as president of RYS, succeeding Wayne Rabideau, who held the position for 15 years. Evans is no newcomer to the organization — he has coached RYS football for 18 years, he has been on the board of directors for 15 years, the last four as vice-president. RYS offers play in baseball, basketball, football, judo and volleyball and more than 4,200 Racine County youths of all economic backgrounds are served by RYS each year. RYS also works in conjunction with Koos for Kids to hold the Koos baseball camps at Haban Park.

In his first meeting as president, which is a volunteer position, Evans detailed ways he will direct RYS into the future.

"The theme is going forward," Evans said. "Wayne Rabideau did a great job with the organization and with Haban Park (the site for baseball and football games). There are other people, like Jeff Jones and Dave Harder, who are instrumental to where we are today. We want to take that positive influence and carry it forward."

RYS has taken that first step with the formation of a Haban Park planning committee headed by RYS board of directors member Glen Lampark. The committee will look into ways to improve and develop the park, including paving the parking lot, landscaping, fencing and adding covered dugouts for baseball games.

"It's an ongoing thing," Evans said. "We want to enhance the diamonds and make them top notch. (RYS sports director) Dan Nicholson is doing a great job making sure the diamonds

and football fields are playable and look good. We're looking for ways to improve on that and with Lampark's expertise, we're looking to make it an even better place to play.

"As soon as the weather is warm, we want to go at it to be ready for summer. We have a lot of volunteers and hundreds will be giving thousands of hours, so we'll get it done."

Another of Evans' missions as president is to increase awareness of RYS in the Racine community, especially with the 30th

anniversary of the organization in 2009.

"I will strive for visibility and awareness of the RYS program and the positive impact that it has on our community," Evans said. "I think we are a well-kept secret and we have to get the word out. We are non-profit and we're not tax-supported, and the more people know about us, the easier it is to promote the program and the easier it is to open doors to corporations, small business groups and service groups to seek support."

One way is through RYS's fundraisers. The largest one of the year is Rotary Vegas Night Sunday, Feb. 21 at Festival Hall. There will be Texas Hold-em poker, roulette, craps, blackjack, a silent auction, prizes, along with food and drink.

RYS also is the beneficiary of Racine Youth Sports Community Night at the Bucks Feb. 28, when the Bucks play host to Racine native Caron Butler and the Washington Wizards, and Racine Night at the Admirals March 28. Money from each ticket sold at both events goes to RYS.

Evans, who also is a member of Racine Youth Athletics Club, a booster club for youth sports not associated with RYS, said almost all of the organization's revenue comes from sports participation fees.

The Evans file

BIRTHDAY: Dec. 1, 1950.

FAMILY: Wife Lynn, daughter Lindsay.

POSITION: President of Racine Youth Sports Board of Directors; also former president of Racine Youth Athletics Club.

OTHER RYS POSITIONS: Football coach for 18 years; member of board of directors for 15 years, last four as vice-president; member of several other RYS committees.

OCCUPATION: Sales support manager for Case New Holland; has been with company for 35 years.

DOING THEIR PART: Evans, other members of the Board of Directors, committee heads and staff all volunteer their time to RYS. The only paid position is that of sports director, held by Dan Nicholson.

RYS AT A GLANCE: More than 4,200 Racine County youth participate in baseball, basketball, football, judo and volleyball; the largest organization of its kind in Wisconsin that is not tax-supported.

WEB SITE: <http://www.racineyouthsports.com>

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