



Joel Austen

Joel's hometown is Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue where he attended Macdonald High School. He graduated from John Abbott in 1991 with a commerce diploma and following a successful college rugby career carried on to a new level at Bishop's University. There, in the early 1990s he captained the team to three provincial championships. The achievements of these teams was recognized by Bishop's with their induction into the University's Sports Hall of Fame. Joel completed his post-secondary education with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration.

He then followed in the footsteps of other John Abbott rugby alumni and became the head coach of the John Abbott Islanders in 1996. Remarkably, he then led the team to 14 consecutive championships, a result not matched by any other team at John Abbott, nor by any college in any sport within the Québec college sport system. Each of these teams offered a different challenge but he acknowledged that the success of the program was dependent upon three variables: "First, the players skill set; second, getting the individuals to work as a team; and finally, the heart".

Joel was a strong adherent of the fundamental role of the John Abbott athletics program and the philosophy which was its guide. Coaches were asked to teach the sport and help prepare student-athletes for their future academic or other careers following graduation. His success in his approach can be well noted in comments from former players:

"I was fortunate enough to have Joey as a coach for three seasons. During those years I learned a lot about rugby. However, those rugby skills were not the most important skills that he taught me. I learned about commitment and hard work. These skills transcend past the sport and into everyday life... He showed us that we were capable of more than we thought... In short, I learned how to be a better person from having Joey as my rugby coach".

"Team play and hard work were the cornerstones of our team. Both of these lessons have served me well after graduation... Joey left a lasting impression and taught our team positive lessons that will serve us for the rest of our lives".

In a Montreal Gazette interview, Joel was asked about the most satisfying part of coaching rugby at John Abbott: *"Winning the sportsmanship team award three times was definitely one of the highlights, but, without a doubt, my favourite is when my players follow up with me over the years and ask for a job reference or invite me to their wedding... to see them grow up and do something positive with their lives is the most satisfying thing I get to watch".*

Joel has left behind an on-field record which may never be challenged but also has placed an indelible mark of the lives of so many student-athletes over his coaching career. He continues to have an influence in the world of sports as a coach in the West Island with Lakeshore hockey and intercity soccer.

Joel has pursued a successful career in the pharmaceutical industry and lives in the West Island with his family.