

## Marv Nelson

### *Coach / Meritorious Service*

"I never had a bad day of coaching/teaching at LHS," states Marv Nelson, whose many years of service to the school district are far-reaching and impressive.

A Bellingham native, Nelson attended Sehome High School, where he was a member of the first graduating class and where he played in the first Sehome-Lynden football game back in 1966. Nelson remembers suffering a significant loss to the Lions, partly because of the Lion's skill and partly because the Mariners did not yet have any seniors at the new school and seven of the starters had been kicked off the team. The following year, his team improved enough to win the conference championship.

Nelson went on to attend Western, where he excelled on the football field. A four-year starter, he earned all-league honors three times and was also recognized as an All-American his senior year. Besides football, Nelson also was a state power lifting champion, setting a couple of state records, and, as a senior, he was selected as an Outstanding College Athlete of America.

After college, Nelson took a teaching job at Zillah for four years before moving back to Whatcom County and taking a job at Lynden, where he would remain for the next thirty years. During his career, he taught a variety of classes, including science, math, history, P.E. and creative writing.

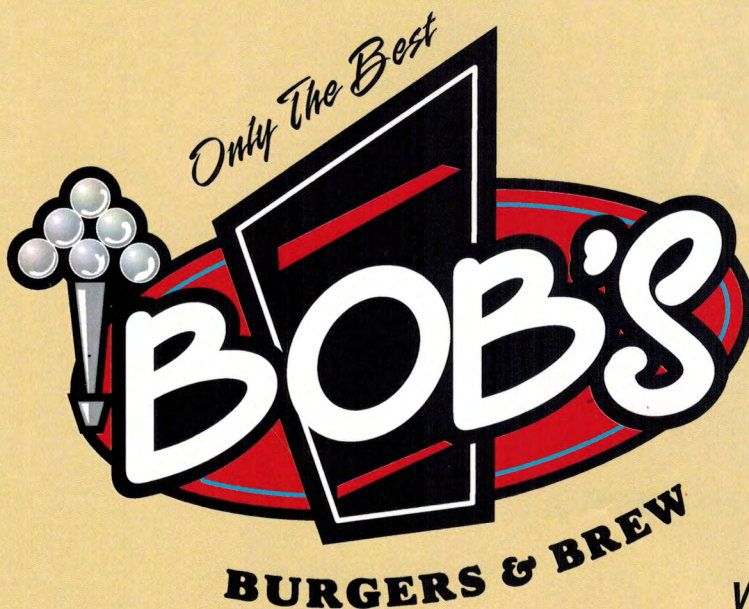
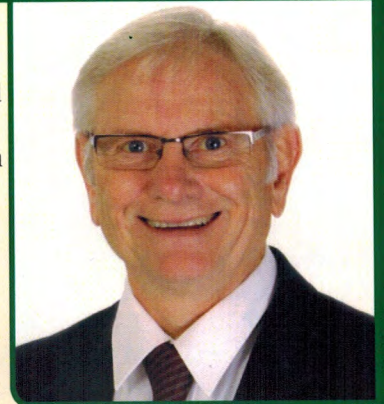
As a coach, Nelson made an impact, serving as a middle school and high school football coach for 31 years, a middle school and high school wrestling coach for 17 years, and a track coach for 25 years. Reflecting on his years in the Lynden athletic program,

Nelson notes, "By and large, I assisted many great coaches and worked with so many Lynden legends. What I saw with Lynden athletics were people who stayed with the programs, giving continuity. Dedication pays dividends."

Nelson also served as the track team's starter since 1982; he only missed a couple of meets in all those years due to a shoulder surgery.

The highlights of Nelson's career are many. For him, the memorable moments ranged from the 1980 State Football championship game, when a monster snow-storm forced some of the players to ride snowmobiles to school to catch the bus, to watching track athletes work tirelessly to improve every day and being able to see their progress (and confidence) growing even if only in terms of inches or tenths of seconds. Other highlights included the 1982 wrestling team, who won the regional championship, and "every middle school season, no matter what sport. Through those youngsters, I learned that every game is the most important in their lives, just as important to them as the high school state championship game."

Nelson's contributions to the Lynden athletic program left a lasting impression on thousands of young people, and he was loved by many and appreciated by all who worked with him over the years. According to former Lynden High School principal, Ken Axelson, "Marv Nelson was the epitome of a dedicated teacher and coach. To say he was one of a kind is an understatement."



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