

# PRESS ARGUS

Volume 163 Number 229

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

www.livingstondaily.com

50¢

## OUR NEIGHBORS

## Just call him coach

Genoa man  
all about  
local youth  
athletics

By Jim Totten  
DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

During the last seven years, he's coached flag football, soccer, basketball, baseball and softball.

"It's a ton of fun," said Bob Lazzari, a father of two who coaches his children's teams.

There is, however, another reason he does it. His younger brother, Dave, served as coach of the Brighton High School junior varsity football team before he died eight years ago from brain cancer. His brother was 30 when he passed away.

Lazzari, who sells safety equipment, recalled how impressed he was with all the students who came up to him during the funeral and spoke highly about his brother.

"What a great legacy," Lazzari said. "I'd like to keep his memory alive by doing that stuff."

Lazzari said his brother gave a lot back to the community, and he hopes to do the same. Lazzari's efforts were recently recognized when he received the TSS Photography Volunteer of the Year award; the company donated \$500 in his honor to the Southeastern Livingston County Recreation Authority.

Growing up, Lazzari said he played every sport except soccer. He graduated from Brighton High School in 1981.

"I know sports kept me out of trouble," he said.

His goal is to turn the younger children on to sports and show it can be fun and teach them about playing as a team. He's also cautious not to be too intense because the last thing he would want to do is turn off a child from a sport. As he says, you might be turning off the next Michael Jordan.

He started off with T-ball when the team needed a volunteer coach and had a ton of fun meeting the parents and kids. He coaches children in elementary and middle school. He's currently coaching his children's two soccer teams.

Although he never played soccer as a kid — he pointed out soccer wasn't offered when he was growing up — he has quickly learned the basics of the game.

Ironically, Lazzari said he's had the most success with his soccer teams. He studied the game and went to clinics.

"I kind of looked at it as an



Photo by GILLIS BENEDICT/DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

Bob Lazzari coaches a number of sports for the Southeastern Livingston County Recreation Authority, helping out young athletes for seven years now.

### ABOUT BOB LAZZARI

- **Age:** 45
- **Residence:** Genoa Township
- **Occupation:** Sells safety equipment
- **Community involvement:** For seven years, he has coached flag football, soccer, basketball, baseball and softball for the Southeastern Livingston County Recreation Authority.
- **Hobbies:** Mountain biking and skiing
- **Family:** Married 14 years to Jennifer. They have two children, Josh, 11, and Rachel, 8.

adventure," he said when it came to learning about soccer.

What's his favorite part about coaching?

"I like seeing kids show up who have never played (soccer), and by the end of the year, seeing how much they've improved," he said.

Lazzari likes to get involved in

his team's practices. He will kick a soccer ball with the kids or try his hand at pitching. During the season, he usually organizes a practice where the children play against the parents.

"We all try to act like we're athletes again," he said. "It usually provides the kids with a

good laugh."

Lazzari said he reminds the children how lucky they are to have an opportunity to play a variety of sports and to have parents who are willing to drive them to numerous practices.

While his wife, Jennifer, jokingly calls him a "45-year-old kid," he said his age is slowly starting to catch up on him.

"At age 45, I have a few aches and pains after practice that I didn't have before," he said. "Something usually hurts on me every day."

As the old saying goes, "No pain, no gain." Anyway, Lazzari is having way too much fun to stop coaching.

Contact Daily Press & Argus reporter Jim Totten at (517) 548-7088 or at jtotten@gannett.com.