

# MN Basketball Hub

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## Mounds View's Kauls retiring after this season

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By David La Vaque

**"Ziggy" will coach 45th season with Mustangs**



Star Tribune file photo

This winter marks the 45th and final season Zigurds "Ziggy" Kauls will coach boys' basketball at Mounds View.

An active member of the state coaches association Hall of Fame, Kauls boasts a career record of 839-492, 35 winning seasons, 12 state tournament appearances and conference championships, three Mr. Basketball recipients and two state championships.

Players learned Thursday of his decision to step down after this season. Kauls' replacement will be determined after this season.

"It's been an amazing experience being a part of Mustang basketball, but it's never been about me," Kauls said in a school press release. "I've enjoyed incredible loyalty and remarkable consistency in my coaching staff, but the true

success of this program belongs to the hundreds of players who have upheld our traditions and embraced teamwork over the decades. I'll miss them all very much, and I'll be watching the future of this program with a lot of pride."

Kauls was a student teacher at Mounds View while attending Hamline University and got hired in 1963. As a volunteer assistant for the track and field team, he worked with the high jumpers, including Tom Kunze, whose father, Joe, was the school principal.

When basketball coach Jim Geske left Mounds View to take the athletics director position at the new Irondale High School in 1967, none of his assistants wanted the job. Kunze summoned Kauls, who had done some scouting for the team.

"I think he played a hunch," Kauls told the Star Tribune in 2005. "He called me into his office and offered me the job. He said, 'We'll give you a few years.'"

Kauls inherited a team that had won a conference championship the previous season, and he posted a 14-6 debut. Then the talent dried up, and three losing seasons ensued. As the losses mounted, the young coach learned.

"There was no height, no athleticism and no coach that knew how to compensate well enough," he said.

Things changed at the end of the 1970-71 season. The team finished 6-14 but won two playoff games to qualify for the Section F semifinals in Williams Arena. The experience stuck with Kauls, who then made it a priority to return as often as possible.

Key personnel changes took place that season as Mark Landsberger and Al Jones were brought up from the B squad. Both would star one year later, along with Kent Pletscher, Tom Kranz and Paul Haskins, as Mounds View went 22-5 and won the 1972 state championship.

The Mustangs returned to the top in 1999. Nick Horvath led the team and set a team record for points per game (26.7).

With players such as Landsberger and Mr. Basketball winners Steve Schlotthauer, Horvath and Travis Busch, Kauls has had his share of talent. But you can't post 35 winning seasons waiting for the naturals to come along. Kauls and his staff prided themselves for developing one or two junior-varsity players into impact varsity players as seniors – players such as Brad Johnson, a non-letterman who served as a captain in the early 1990s, and Carl Anderson, who saw his first varsity action as a senior in 2004-05 and keyed Mounds View's state tournament run.

Louis Mitteco coached at Totino-Grace for 38 years, back when the school shared a conference with Mounds View, and suffered at times from Kauls' ability to get the most of players.

"We played them off and on for 30 years and we didn't win very much," Mitteco said in 2005. "He's a very astute basketball person. He always has a great game plan, and that's helped him beat teams more talented than his."

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