



FOOTBALL

Sullivan | For prep coaches, wins mean long hours

By **Tim Sullivan**, @TimSullivan714 January 5, 2017

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Ty Scroggins figures he worked 40 games for free.



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Central Yellowjackets head coach Tyrran Scroggins talks to his players during a time-out. 30 Oct 2015

All of those playoff games, all of that postseason planning and preparation, and all five of the Class 3-A state football championships Scroggins brought to Central High School amounted to so much unpaid overtime.

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That's a lot to ask on a pro bono basis, but that's the way things work around here. The head football coach at a Jefferson County public high school earns no more than a \$7,744 stipend whether his team goes winless or takes home the trophy.

Or five trophies.

The reward for winning, JCPS athletic director Jerry Wyman says, is "We give them long hours to work."

Scroggins is walking away after 10 years of leading the Yellowjackets because he needs the time more than he needs the money. As a divorced dad with twins headed to high school in the fall, he is calling a career timeout to tend to his children. He will continue to teach 9th-grade civics at Central during his sabbatical from the sidelines because it is teaching that pays the bulk of his bills.

Coaching high school football has become a well-paid profession in some places – even in public schools – and often without the burden of classroom responsibilities. But salary databases show that Louisville’s most successful public school coaches are lagging far behind their counterparts in Texas and the deep south.

C-J EXCLUSIVE: Less cash, more concerns in high school sports

Six-figure salaries have become commonplace in high school football’s most competitive markets. Jess Simpson, seven times a state champion at Georgia’s Buford High School, was already making more than \$174,000 when he left that job last month to become the defensive line coach at Georgia State.

A database maintained by bizjournals.com shows Ty Scroggins’ annual salary at \$71,534.16. Though that figure may be outdated, it’s less than University of Louisville defensive coordinator Todd Grantham makes in a month. With athletic budgets for many public schools already severely stretched, local high school coaches can expect to change their tires more often than their tax brackets.

“The guys that go into public education, they know that you don’t do it for the money,” Central High principal Raymond Green said. “If money is what’s keeping a coach, I’m questioning why they’re a coach at the high school level. If you’re a high school coach and



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“Your reward is not money. Your reward is seeing that kid signing a letter of intent (to accept a college scholarship).”

Altruism goes a long way in public schools. Teachers commonly provide supplies out of their own pockets and linger after the final bell to assist struggling students and aid in extra-curricular activities. They don’t expect to get rich from their labors. Neither, however, do they deserve to be exploited.

Oak Grove (Cal.) coach Jay Braun, a full-time history teacher who receives a stipend to coach football, estimated in 2015 that he made about \$7 per hour for practices and

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games. For the purposes of his calculation, though, Braun did not include those hours he spent watching film, scouting rivals, raising funds or counseling kids.

“People say we don’t do it for the money, and we don’t,” Braun told the San Jose Mercury News. “But that doesn’t mean I shouldn’t be fairly compensated for it. They take advantage of our kindness.”

Nothing new there. Teachers and coaches have been sacrificing their own interests for the sake of their students since before Socrates found a protégé in Plato. Theirs is among the most noble of callings and, traditionally, among the least lucrative.

“It’s definitely something you have to be passionate about,” Wyman said. “(But) As a coach, you have an impact on kids like nothing else. To spend one-on-one time for hours and hours and go into battle, it’s very rewarding. It comes back to you 10-fold.”

Wyman sent Scroggins a text message Tuesday night telling him of how much his impact would be felt, and confirmation came quickly. Scroggins received so many congratulatory calls and correspondence that his cell phone battery ran out of juice for the first time.

Some Central High students received an alert on their own phones and feared the news was worse until they scrolled through the specifics.

“Some of them are from rough neighborhoods,” Scroggins said. “They wondered, ‘What did he die or something?’ I didn’t pass away. I just resigned.”

The 45-year-old coach emphasized that his resignation should not be confused with retirement, and that he might be back.

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If he should miss the money, there are easier ways to make it.

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Central High School coach Tyrran Scroggins squats on his sideline during the Yellow Jackets game against Belfry during the KHSAA Commonwealth Gridiron Bowl at Western Kentucky University on Friday, December 5, 2014. Photo by Brian Powers



Central High School head coach Tyrran Scroggins reacts to his team play against South Warren High School during the first half of play at Central High School in Louisville, Kentucky. November 28, 2014

Central High School, football, Jefferson County Public Schools, Jerry Wyman, Jess Simpson, Raymond Green, retirement, Tim Sullivan, Todd Grantham, Ty Scroggins, Louisville, Central High School (Louisville KY), Football, Grant County High School (Dry Ridge KY), Green County High School (Greensburg KY), Western High School



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