



**Carol Zirkle**  
Fredonia Central  
CCAA Female Representative

Obviously, to a mathematician, numbers tell the story. Nearly every problem can be solved by a formula. Factoring, completing the square, graphing and the old quadratic equation. Carol Zirkle has lived inside the numbers, first as a math teacher at a boarding school in New Hampshire, followed by five years at Ripley and the last 20 years at Fredonia High School.

The Brocton native and member of their Athletic Hall of Fame earned both degrees from SUNY Fredonia, first a BS followed by a Master's in Math Education. She competed in volleyball and basketball at Brocton and expanded her horizons at Fredonia State, participating in five different collegiate sports. She played four years of basketball for the Blue Devils, two years of cross-country and a year each of track and field, soccer and volleyball.

"Both my parents were teachers and I decided early on that I wanted to follow in their footsteps," Zirkle explains. "I started playing sports in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and I loved every minute of athletics. I knew that I wanted to coach in addition to teach. Teaching and coaching are very rewarding because you get to see your students and athletes grow and change. My high school role models helped guide me as well. I'm especially grateful for my English teacher, Jane Dickerson and basketball coach, John Murgatroyd."

Carol started her legendary coaching career at Ripley where she led the basketball and cross-country programs for the five years. In 2000, she made the move to Fredonia eventually leading both sports there as well. **You want numbers?**

4 Sectional Titles in Basketball

6 Sectional Titles in Cross Country

6 Sectional Runners-up in Basketball

1 Trip to the Final Four in Basketball

13 League Titles in Cross-Country

262 Career Wins as Basketball coach



Fredonia Athletic Director, Greg Lauer beams about Carol. "Carol is one of the most dedicated coaches I have seen in my career. She is willing to go above and beyond for her kids. She is dedicated year-round to the development of her athletes. She constantly puts an emphasis on character and team building."

Zirkle loves to travel and cites the Grand Canyon, Kenya and the Galapagos Islands as her favorite vacation spots. She has hiked the Grand Canyon four times and spent eight days rafting through the canyon's entirety. That dedication, goal setting and determination was an important part of Carol's coaching.

Fredonia grad, former player and Williamsville North AP/AD, Julie Arnold remarks, "Coach Zirkle treated her players as if they were her daughters. She was a tough coach, but for all the right reasons. She not only coaches the skills to play the game of basketball, but also focuses on the character traits and work ethic needed to succeed in life."

Another former athlete, Krista Wheelock who is currently at the US Navy Academy, played a year of hoops at Navy Academy Prep in Rhode Island and marveled, "Zirkle taught me how to be a leader, and a follower at the same time. She taught me how to compartmentalize and handle stress, and her rigorous practices helped too," Wheelock said. "Everyone else on the team at Academy Prep was saying how intense and crazy our practices were, but they just felt normal to me."

Wheelock will forever remember Zirkle driving all the way to Rhode Island to watch one of her games. "Just the fact she drove eight hours to see my basketball game, I was just so appreciative of that. The way she treats me, and all of her former players is amazing," Wheelock says.

Coach Zirkle points to ice cream as her favorite food. As a math teacher and keeper of numbers, she may know that there are 60 flavors at Ben & Jerry's. She realizes that the trip from her stomping grounds of Brocton to Fredonia is seven miles. She has three sisters and eight nieces and nephews and her all-time favorite movie, 'Hoosiers', demonstrated that every rim is 10 feet off the floor no matter what gym you're in.

Plug those numbers into a linear equation or even the Pythagorean Theorem and the slope-intercept equates to sustained success, love from her players and a career of incalculable impact on Fredonia High School.