

◆ Coach Profile

Meet William S. Hicks



William S. Hicks coaches at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis, IN. Bill is a sixth diamond coach and a member of the NFL Hall of Fame.

What was your first NFL experience?

When I was a senior in high school, the high school speech coach, who happened to be Hall of Fame Coach Jim Hawker, talked me into getting my NFL membership to be in the yearbook with the other speech team members. Then I asked him how I could get the most points possible and I went to my next tournament in Boys Extemp and earned enough points to get my NFL membership. That was also the end of my high school speech career.

When did you decide to be a teacher and/or coach?

Probably my sophomore year in college, after I realized I was not going to be a math teacher after taking my first 7:30 a.m. calculus class. At the time I was assisting Mr. Hawker's team and judging.

What is your team philosophy?

Basically to encourage participation and let as many students as possible participate. Also, to see my students continually improve.

How many hours do you spend with this activity a week?

I used to spend about twenty, including the Saturday trip. I normally stay about 2 hours after school every day. As of last year, I'm slowing down and spending less time on weekends at meets. I have excellent speech and debate coaches taking over most of the coaching duties.

What is your vision for the future of the NFL?

I'm very happy with all of the changes. Mr. Wunn's leadership has been outstanding. My vision is that the NFL will continue to grow and reach more people. It goes back to my team philosophy which is to get as many people as possible involved.

What is exciting about being an NFL coach in the state of Indiana?

Just the camaraderie with the other coaches out on the circuit and friendships that will last a lifetime.

What's unique about Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory as an NFL chapter?

We've had lots of outstanding students and have been incredibly successful. (if that is unique.)

What qualities do you look for when recruiting students for your program?

Breathing. (laughs) Basically, I try to learn from them what their strengths are to know what events they would be most successful in.

How has the NFL changed since your days as a competitor?

Its grown and there's probably 2 or 4 times as many events. The points available to students have increased. Back in my day you could only get about 150 points maximum. Even the size of the national tournament is huge now.

What is your favorite memory from a National Tournament?

Probably when my student won 1st place in the Senate in Fargo, North Dakota. I was up in the balcony because I didn't expect him to win and I ran all the way down to the stage. Other highlights would include co-hosting two nationals in Indianapolis.

What is the greatest challenge as a coach today?

Competing with all of the other academic and athletic events. Really, just students' time.

Are there any rituals/lucky traditions that you employ as a coach?

I'm sure we've got some but they just happen. One year the kids had a car that they carried around to tournaments.

What's your favorite weekend tournament food item?

Hot dogs. It's not my favorite but it's the best of what is available. Coffee is also mandatory.

