



Patti Zenner

Poth High School

Few coaches in Texas high school athletics have defined success the way Patti Zenner has. Spanning over three decades, her career is not just measured in victories but in the countless lives she has shaped through mentorship, leadership, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. A cornerstone of Texas high school sports, Zenner has cultivated champions, built powerhouse programs, and inspired generations of athletes across multiple sports. As a head volleyball coach for 32 years, alongside 28 years as an assistant in basketball, 30 in track, and two as head tennis coach, her legacy is one of resilience, dedication, and lasting impact. More than the wins and accolades, Zenner has instilled values of teamwork and discipline that have carried countless athletes beyond the court and into life. Recognized as one of the most respected coaches in Texas high school athletics, her influence is etched not only in record books but in the lives of those she has helped guide.

A proud La Vernia High School graduate and salutatorian of her class, Zenner continued her academic and athletic career at Texas Lutheran University, where she played collegiate volleyball for four years. She honed her skills both on and off the court, graduating magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Zenner began her professional career at Woodsboro ISD, where she first taught junior high math and coached 8th-grade girls' athletics. The following year, she stepped into her first head coaching position, marking the beginning of an

extraordinary coaching journey. After one year as head volleyball coach at Woodsboro High School, Zenner took the reins at Poth High School, a position she held for 31 years. During 32 seasons as a head volleyball coach, her teams have been a dominant force, making the playoffs every single year, a testament to her leadership and a reflection of her consistency and ability to build elite-level teams year after year.

Her legacy truly took shape at Poth ISD, where under her leadership, the Poth volleyball program became one of the most successful in the state, consistently competing at the highest level, achieving an impressive 306-14 district record over 31 years while winning 27 district championships, along with earning 24 regional tournament appearances, 19 regional final appearances, 13 state tournament appearances, 12 state final appearances, and winning 9 state championships (1995, 1996, 1997, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2011, 2014). During this past season, Zenner also surpassed the remarkable milestone of 900 career victories, further cementing her expertise and unwavering commitment to excellence.

Zenner's impact on young athletes extends far beyond championships. Numerous players under her guidance have earned All-District, All-State, All-Star, Academic All-State, and even All-American honors. In addition, many of her athletes have continued their volleyball careers at the collegiate level and/or entered the teaching and coaching profession, a testament to her lasting influence.

While Zenner takes the most pride in her players' accomplishments, she has also earned numerous personal accolades, including:

- San Antonio Express News Coach of the Year (1995, 2004)
- HS Extra - Coach Who Makes a Difference (2000)
- TGCA 1A-2A-3A Coach of the Year (2005)
- National Federation of State High Schools - Texas Coach of the Year (2006)
- TGCA All-Star Coach (2003, 2010)
- Texas Sportswriters' Association 3A Coach of the Year (2006, 2009, 2011, 2014)
- Texas Lutheran Distinguished Alumni (2007)
- South Texas Coaches' Association All-Star Coach (2022)

Beyond volleyball, Zenner played a role in Poth High School's basketball program as an assistant coach, helping contribute to 13 state tournament appearances, 3 state

final appearances and 2 state championships (1997, 2007). She also spent two years as the head tennis coach, leading a team to state alternate status in mixed doubles along the way. In addition, she has served as an assistant track coach for 30 years which included volunteering at the Region IV regional track meet for over 20 years.

Zenner is also deeply committed to advancing girls' athletics statewide, demonstrated through her involvement in the Texas Girls Coaches Association (TGCA). Over her career, she has served in various roles -- as a member of the volleyball committee (chair 1 year), the volleyball all-state committee and the board of directors, as well as filling in on the sub-varsity and basketball and track all-state committees for other coaches when needed -- helping ensure recognition for athletes and coaches across the state in multiple disciplines. Additionally, she has shared her expertise by speaking at coaching clinics such as TGCA and THSCA, continually learning and refining her craft. Beyond her direct coaching efforts, Zenner has helped grow the game by offering team camps for numerous schools throughout her career, providing athletes with the skills and opportunities needed to excel.

Patti Zenner's legacy is woven into the fabric of Texas high school athletics—a legacy defined not only by victories but by the relationships she has fostered, the standards she has set, and the countless lives she has influenced. For generations of athletes and coaches, her name is etched not only in record books but in the hearts of those she has mentored.