

IBCA Assistant Coach of the Year: Brian Samples, Oldenburg Academy girls



Brian Samples and David Disbro go back. Way back. Back to the mid-1980s when they were rivals competing for South Ripley and South Dearborn high schools, respectively. After both graduating in 1986, they each went to Marian College in Indianapolis. There, they became baseball teammates, roommates and friends for life.

Over the years, both men have had excellent success as coaches. That included Disbro going 332-220 in 24 seasons from 1999 to 2023 as boys' basketball head coach at East Central. Over the same span, Samples was a boys' basketball assistant at Jac-Cen-Del, a girls' basketball assistant at Jac-Cen-Del, a varsity softball coach at Jac-Cen-Del, a girls' basketball head coach at South Ripley, a varsity softball coach at South Ripley, a girls' basketball assistant at Jac-Cen-Del again and a girls' basketball head coach at South Ripley again.

In the fall of 2023, the duo became teammates again – Disbro as head coach and Samples as assistant coach for Oldenburg Academy girls' basketball. Now in two seasons coaching together, they have guided the Twisters to a 40-10 record with a 2025 Class A sectional title, the program's third overall and first since 2006.

For his efforts over the years, Samples has been named an IBCA Assistant Coach of the Year for 2025.

"Brian's impact on our players has been indescribable," Disbro said in nominating Samples for the award. "He is an outstanding shooting coach. I've never seen anyone in 34 years of coaching who can help a player with technique, confidence and their mind as well as he does it comes to shooting. He is a great coach whom his players trust, listen to and care about. He is known for sending us all inspirational texts and words of wisdom in our group chats with the team."

Samples began his coaching career as a junior high basketball coach at South Ripley, coaching boys' basketball and girls' basketball for four seasons each from 1991 to 1998. He followed as a boys' basketball assistant at Jac-Cen-Del from 1998-2001, a girls' basketball assistant at Jac-Cen-Del in 2001-02 and the South Ripley girls' head coach from 2008-13. He was a Jac-Cen-Del girls' basketball assistant for a Class A state championship team in 2015-16, then South Ripley girls' head coach again from 2016-19. Samples' coaching odyssey also includes varsity softball at South Ripley in 1996 and 1997, at Jac-Cen-Del from 1999 to 2003 and from 2005-08, and at South Ripley again in 2011 and 2012.

The veteran mentor has a 144-48 record in eight seasons as a varsity girls' basketball coach with six sectional titles (2010, 2011, 2012, 2017, 2018 and 2019). He has helped teams go a combined 80-21 in 11 seasons as a girls' basketball assistant. And helped teams post a 43-24 slate as a boys' basketball assistant. In 13 seasons as a softball coach, Samples' record is 165-90. The softball ledger includes a 117-70 mark in nine seasons at Jac-Cen-Del with five sectional titles (2002, 20025, 2006, 2007 and 2008), one regional crown (2007) and a State Finals appearance in 2007.

Samples – who noted that he never has coached against Disbro – was inducted into the Ripley County Basketball Hall of Fame as a coach in 2022.

"Brian is a dedicated coach, and I never have seen anyone watch more video, make himself available to our players more and be there when he is needed," Disbro said. "He is a 'straight shooter' with our players but does it in a very positive way. Our girls love him for many reasons, but his positive approach and help for them are chief among them. I have seen him leave work early to get to practice or a game. He is also the first to invite the team to his house after games, show up at the girls' other sporting events, music concerts, graduation parties and other special events."

Samples' wife, Kathy, was diagnosed with cancer last fall, so Disbro was concerned that Samples might not be available to assist this past season. Fortunately, Samples was able to continue in his coaching role. During the season, the Oldenburg Academy program raised more than \$4,000 to help defray family medical expenses in a benefit game.

"Brian and his wife almost always drive together to our games," Disbro said. "The first question I always get is on game-day from our players is, 'When will Coach Samp be here?'"

A 1991 Marian College graduate, Samples was a teacher at Jac-Cen-Del from 1998 to 2002 before moving into the business world. For the past 14 years, he has worked for Ohio Rod Products and Best Metal Finishing, sister companies in Versailles and Osgood, the former producing fasteners and the latter a zinc-plating facility. He also calls basketball games WRBI Radio in Batesville and enjoys golf, all sports in general and spending time with family.

He and Kathy have three adult children – Keith, Chase and Stephanie – and five grandchildren.

When Disbro stepped down as the East Central boys' coach and was pondering the move to the Oldenburg Academy girls' program, it was Samples who provided insightful counsel.

"I owe a great deal of gratitude to Coach Samples for helping me with the OA girls," Disbro said. "When I was considering this job, Brian was the first person I called. He has been a girls' coach and I had not. I needed to know if I could do this. Brian told me exactly what I needed to know and then asked if I needed help. It was the best phone call I ever made, and no one more deserving of this award than Brian Samples."