

his Moira senior girls soccer team "had a great run" in the Bay of Quinte league.

"We had some great athletes on that team too," says Hildebrandt. "Liisa Wannan, Melanie and Sarah Hurst and, recently, Amie Van Soelen."

Citing that team, Hildebrandt laughs as he recalls a particular incident during an exhibition game between his senior girls and a boys squad.

"At one point, one of the boys was going for the ball and so was Melanie Hurst. Well, she got the ball. I asked the boy if he was okay and he said, 'yes, but that's the prettiest truck I've ever been hit by.'"

Hildebrandt says he found immediate differences between coaching boys and girls (for instance, he tries not to yell at the girls) but he maintains both genders are equally competitive.

And Hildebrandt finds himself just as competitive as when he blew the whistle to start his first soccer practice 30 years ago.

"You go out there and you don't want to admit the youngsters can outrun you," he says.

Other intangibles keep Hildebrandt in the thick of the coaching game.

"The involvement, it keeps you young," he says. "The relationships with the kids. They're really a great bunch. To a large extent they (teenagers) get a bad rap.

"And, it may sound trite, but it's one way to put back what you've gotten out of the system. I think it's important to put something back into the community in which you worked."

As might be expected after three decades of coaching, Hildebrandt has his own golden rules for up-and-coming sideline mentors.

"The main thing is you have to earn the respect of the players," he says. "And you have to remind yourself it's much easier to tell a player what to do rather than go out and do it yourself. You've got to be positive and have good things to say about the fringe people, not just the stars.

"Because without them, there's no team."

CONT'D

Intelligence, p. 7
March 7/97.