

Jerry Dawson steps down after 37 years as Chaparral baseball coach

by **José E. Garcia** - Aug. 19, 2010 The Arizona Republic

Scottsdale Chaparral baseball coach Jerry Dawson told his players Thursday afternoon he was stepping down after 37 memorable and successful varsity seasons.

The state's career leader in coaching victories (773-301) still has the desire to coach, but his body is telling him to slow down, Dawson said. Ankle, knee and foot surgeries have taken a toll on the 67-year-old coach, one of the architects of Chaparral's successful athletic program.

Profile: Jerry Dawson

Dawson practically lived on his immaculate baseball field, tending to it every minute he could. It bothered him that he couldn't stay and cut every blade of grass, and he took it as a sign that it was time to let another coach take over.

He has recommended that assistant Sam Messina become the coach. But don't expect Dawson to completely retire.

He lives in Prescott and said that in a couple of days he might become an assistant coach at another program. Dawson is the only baseball coach Chaparral has had.

Aside from helping produce Major League talent like New York Mets first baseman Ike Davis, first baseman Paul Konerko of the Chicago White Sox, and pitcher Brian Bannister of the Kansas City Royals, Dawson also won eight Class 4A titles in 10 finals appearances.

Dawson's right-hand man, longtime assistant coach Mark Miller, also is stepping down.

Dawson got emotional when he was asked what he would like his players to remember the most about him.

"Hopefully, work ethic," he said. "Hopefully, honesty. Hopefully, trust between yourself and my players."