

**Mel Gardner
William Penn HS, DE
Region 2 (Mid Atlantic) Executive Committee Chairman**

By Casie Vogel – NHSBCA writer

There are many ways coaches can be involved in the BCA beyond membership. For some coaches like Mel Gardner, being a part of the BCA's inner circle has been one of the most rewarding and difficult jobs he's ever had.

Gardner, a retired head coach at William Penn High School in Newcastle, DE, is one of the BCA's committee chairmen that helps the organization select Player of the Year, Team of the Year, and the All-Region team.

"I put 100 hours a year into doing that. It was probably one of the hardest jobs I've had in my life, actually," he said. "It was a lot of work and it was frustrating but it was rewarding also because you did get to make contact with a lot of good people throughout the region and through the association of course."

For the last three years Gardner has been the chairman for District 2, which covers six different states, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. In the course of a year he talks with coaches and state association heads to get information about up and coming high school players and teams. "It all works out in the end, it was a lot of work but it was fun," Gardner said.

Gardner's term as committee chairman has ended and he is working towards finding a replacement. He has been promoted to the executive committee, who has an equally tough job of choosing Hall of Fame coaches and planning the annual convention.

Gardner is also involved in the Delaware Baseball Coaches Association and is currently the executive secretary of the state association. He recently retired from coaching, but still enjoys the game and being involved with coaching associations.

"I miss the coaching a little bit, but not as much as I thought I would," he said. "I didn't pick up a fungo all year, I haven't thrown a ball all year, I've just enjoyed the game. It will remain to be a part of my life."