**AWARDS SPEECH**

**FOR**

**BRENDON SMITH**

Hello everyone... my name is Brendon Smith and it is a great privilege and distinct pleasure to have the opportunity to say a few words about tonight’s honoree, Mike Gorni. (**If you want to make a little joke, you can say**) When Mike asked me to introduce him tonight, I thought to myself.... “how could I refuse?” ... I mean... **REALLY**.... I’m so used to taking instruction and directions from him... after all, he was **MY** high school soccer coach... that all I could think of was... **YES, COACH**!!! **Of COURSE COACH**!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). The truth is... I've never been the most dynamic public speaker, but I have always been inspired, motivated... and moved to constantly “improve my game...” in all areas of my life, thanks to Mike Gorni and the example he sets for others, so there was **no way** I would miss this opportunity... I’ve heard that Coach John Wooden has said, “A good coach can change a game. A great coach can change a life...” Ladies and gentlemen, when I think of Mike Gorni, I have to say, truer words have not been spoken.

Lucky for me, Mike was my high school soccer coach here at Central Bucks High School. He was my coach for about seven years and then after college, I coached beside him for about six or seven more years. In that time, I got to learn the mechanics and the strategies we need to bring success. I learned what it means to lead. I learned what it means for someone to be inspired to give his or her all... and **THEN** some, and everything I learned was thanks to the the dedication and devotion that Mike Gorni brings to everything he does. Mike is a fantastic coach and role model... but his impact doesn’t stop there... Mike is like a second father to me, and to sort of quote a movie line, he really does “make me want to be a better man.” I have found, both personally and professionally, that Mike has a gift.... he may be a tough coach when he’s doing his job... but he works his “magic” in his own special style... one that has touched the lives of so many kids... and grown ups too. He has taught everyone so many valuable life lessons through his approach to his mentoring...but part of what makes him so great is that he also knows how to honor and acknowledge someone for a job well done. Mike has **guts**... and he has **HEART**... Hands down... and even though I moved on to Division 1 soccer when I left Central Bucks, without a doubt, Mike Gorni was... and **is**... the best coach I ever had.... and his influence and wisdom go way beyond the high school soccer field. He has always been there for me... whether I needed advice or some gentle... or not so gentle encouragement.... he’s not only an amazing coach... he’s an awesome mentor and an even better friend.

His list of achievements and accomplishments are long and impressive and include such distinctions as, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. To me, his greatest achievement is the way he lives his life... with purpose, integrity, and incredible respect for his players and everyone around him. He has made a positive, indelible mark on this sport, this school, and this community, and for that, his induction tonight into the Central Bucks High School Hall Of Fame is an honor that is a reflection of a lifetime of inspiration, hard work, and dedication.

Mike, I want to congratulate you on this achievement... you have **ALWAYS** been in my own personal Hall of Fame.... Congratulations!!