

# REBEL 5IVE



## Episode #19 – Andy Niewedde

Gary: [00:02](#) You're listening to Rebel 5ive an interactive interview podcast with alumni, past and current parents and friends of Roncalli High School . I'm your host, Gary Armbruster, Director of Alumni and Corporate Relations at Roncalli . And each week I will ask our guests five questions regarding how their lives have evolved and how key connections of experience, opportunity and alumni networking have propelled them to where they are today. We'll talk challenges, how to overcome challenges and what they've learned along the way. Stay tuned.

Gary: [00:33](#) We're here today on the Rebel 5ive podcast with Andy Niewedde. Andy hails from Brownstown Central home of the Braves. Andy is a teacher in the math department and he has, been our co-chair in the math department with Laura Armbruster for five years entering his sixth year, 21st year overall at Roncalli , which is is that, that's hard to believe. I had just completed my 21st year. You attended Butler University, at UIndy. welcome to the Rebel 5ive podcast. Andy. Thank you. Good to be here. You're from Brownstown Central down by Seymour. you went to Butler. How did you get the Roncalli?

Andy: [01:15](#) Teaching at East Nobel? My first year, which is where? Fort Wayne. Okay. my, when I was at Butler, I ran the girl's coach at that time was a classmate of Chucks. I wanted to be an assistant coach at east noble cause they had a really good program and I learned a lot.

Andy: [01:34](#) And then he contacted Chuck and said, Hey, there's a guy that would be interested in coming back down to Indy. And there was a math opening and across country position. Chuck called me. I was heading out to California on vacation to visit a friend, stopped here before I left. He contacted me in California and said, I've got the job if you want it. Said I want it. Got Home Saturday, moved down here. I had no place to live. they set me up with Rob Kratoska's sister and her husband in Greenwood. Yeah, they lived right by the, I think the city building there. I think in Greenwood, up half of their house was kind of sequestered off. So I lived there. I didn't know him. I didn't know anybody. I just, and I, and I rented a u haul, came down and it was one day before official practice started, hadn't met a soul.

Andy: [02:31](#) 22 still, getting ready to turn 23 and I was the head boys and girls cross coach and the head boys, track coach and let's go. You're from Brownstown central. Roncalli is what, an hour, hour and a half north. did you have any history or any knowledge Roncalli at all?

Andy: [02:50](#) Not before I went to Butler. you gotta remember Brownstown has two winter sports as well. Boys and girls basketball. So as far as wrestling, when I student taught, that was the first time I knew that wrestling was a high school sport. I didn't, I didn't realize, I just, we just never, Butler didn't have it right. We didn't have it. And I just assumed everybody just had two winter sports. But, I did an experience at Butler where we went, help to different schools and I was placed at Ritter and Alfie Hernandez with my teacher that I observed.

Andy: [03:26](#) And that was the first time I'd been familiar with like an archdiocese school.

Gary: [03:31](#) You mentioned, before we started about the familiarity maybe that you saw at Ritter that's kind of a funny story.

Andy: [03:37](#) Yeah, so I was, when I came in to interview at Roncalli, I just kept thinking, I feel like I've been here before and I didn't realize until we sit down in the interview and I'm like, man, this feels familiar. And, and I had told Chuck about my experience at Ritter and he was on my resume and he said, well, we're all the same building. But that, yeah, it felt familiar

Gary: [03:58](#) Just about all of our guests on the Rebel Five podcasts. I've asked them about their first job. So what was your first job and, and, do you have any things that you drew from that job that you maybe still use today or first job after college?

Andy: [04:13](#) Nope. Your very first job. Oh Wow. I guess when, I guess, I don't know if it's really a job, but I just, I grew up on a farm so absolutely it was a, you know, that not fun at times. Yeah. Cause we, started school, let's say 8:30, I think. But I think part of that is we were a rural community. Some guessing, a lot of people had to get up and do some work maybe before, I was in sports so I had to do a lot of my stuff before school. It just taught me the value of hard work. You know, my dad, you know, worked all hours and my grandpa owned a saw mill and had a farm, so I helped him in the summers as well. And it, just, those lessons of hard work and persistence and you don't leave until it's finished and it's eight in the evening and that's okay, we're going to get this done and we're going to get up at five in the morning to do this.

Andy: [05:08](#) And because it needs to get done. It kind of fit. When I came here, you know, I was, I came, I thinking about this today, I came when John Wirtz as a baseball coach. Yeah. Kathy Nalley Schembra, Bob Kirkhoff, Bruce Scifres. I mean pretty established list of coaches and really the only way that you get respect from people is if you earn it. And this place just fit for me what I wanted to do. I mean it was earn it, go get it if you want something done, do it. And all those lessons that I felt like I learned growing up were just right here as the way it was.

Gary: [05:45](#) How did that translate into coaching, cross country and track and field?

Andy: [05:48](#) I think it helped me as far as, I feel like never wanted a team to be outworked. If we're out talented, if we get beat for, you know, if we have a bad day it happens. But never because we were outworked. And I feel like that was kind of the foundational, I guess my foundation as a coach. And I feel like kids can respect that and buy into that and they, they realize that you're not asking them to be superman or superwoman just to go out there and work. And like I said, if somebody beats us cause they had a better team, so be it

Gary: [06:21](#) Coming in as a cross country runner, they don't always know what they're getting into. You demanded the best that they could do, not only in the classroom but you know, as a runner. So do you have anybody that rings out in, in your mind that, came in maybe a little green and said, you know, I gotta do what he says and then was very successful after that.

Andy: [06:42](#) It's funny cause there's a lot of journeys with different kids. I would say probably one that when he left, I looked back and thought, man, that kid really worked hard and bought in. Was Chad Horty [inaudible] Chad is probably 5'6" looks more like a wrestler probably than a, than a runner. And, it took him a year to just really get it, but he ended up being, you know, a sub 16:30 runner and sub 10 minute two miler and qualified for semi-state on his zone. I mean was you know, and, and the regional and track and wasn't somebody that you would look at and say, wow, this kid's really get a lot of talent

Gary: [07:19](#) As a, a Roncalli program. We haven't had that many really strong runners over the years. You come in and kind of talk about how that program developed and some of those, those outstanding runners that you had.

Andy: [07:36](#) So when I left, if first showed up, the numbers were pretty good. That maybe the commitment level, like especially out of season, right? Not, not as, not as where it should be. So, but my first year I walk in and they had a really good senior boy, Ryan Lawson, and in a pretty solid senior boy class. so I think Ryan was talented and just needed a little bit of a push. He had been to the regional but just couldn't get over that hump. We, we trained hard, but I don't think that was really the difference for him. I think he was just somebody that he felt he could trust me on race day, that we would develop a plan and we could get it done and that we were gonna we were going to get to the state meet and it, I think it helped me being at east noble and then running obviously at Butler to just come in with the attitude of well that's where we should go if we're good enough.

Andy: [08:31](#) So that first year though, you're breaking a lot of habits. So, so that group was pretty strong headed and so was I, but it was good because we ended up, I think we won city that year. Ryan made it to state and a cross and track and then we went through a down cycle and the boys, while the girls were better the next year, the girls won the city and the year after that, so my third year of the girls made it to semi-state. So before the boys did as a team and the boys were, that's really where we were building. I mean that first year we had a good team, but it really wasn't anything that we had built. No CYO cross country yet. A group of south side coaches got with me, Barry Howard and they got with me, I think it was 99 maybe we put on the CYO meet here.

Andy: [09:25](#) Frank Sergi was the AD helped me align the course. Bob McFadden made a banner. they made Ed Tinder told me that we had to put it on and then they would come and see the interest level and when that went over and then they became a CYO sport, I felt like that helped the program and I think it helped all the archdiocese schools and then, kids just started coming in with a little bit of an idea of what it was going to be like. So then from there, I gave up the girls just if it was becoming a little bit too much, but that 98 team of the girls was, I really liked that team as one of the Grittier, meaner teams that I've ever coached. they were competitive Jean buckle. Rita and Ann Davis, Kathy Howard Kitchens would go in sophomore, right.

Andy: [10:22](#) Chrissy Buchmeier at that time would've been a junior I think. So a lot of, familiarity with that team as far as now I'm working with Kathy and right then and that early 2000's, Dean Meacham came along and made it to state again for the guys. And then the group that was a sophomore class when he was a senior, Doug Higgins, Dan Camden, that's really where it, that's when we kind of took off and I can track, they want the sectional the four by eight we were able to compete with FC and Warren. so that, that group kind of took it to the next level. And then when they were seniors, Kyle Owens, Mike Sobecki, Zach Gromer, are freshmen. So then, and Chad Horty is a junior, Thomas Able was a sophomore and so that group just kept the ball rolling. And so then it just became, I think Mike and Kyle and Zach's year, we were ranked 12th, I think.

Andy: [11:22](#) And we were, we were, we were ranked 12th then we were the fourth highest ranked team in our sectional. Because Warren and FC, went one, two at the state meet and Ben Davis was in there. And I was felt like those things helped our team be as good as they could be. And you always look back and say, oh, it's kind of unfortunate that they didn't, but we also wouldn't have been as good as we were if we didn't have those guys pushing us to catch him. So it Kinda, it Kinda started rolling.

Gary: [11:49](#) When you're a cross country runner, you know, you're not going to get a whole lot of accolades right. A school wide. And that's right. You know, you're not playing on Friday night. You're not playing in

front of 4,000 people. You're not playing in the woodshed in front of, you know, a thousand people. and it's tough. You have to get up, you have to do the work. So talk a little bit about that. Motivating these kids. What is the payoff for them and how do you translate that to them?

Andy: [12:21](#) I think the biggest thing was all the lessons I learned from running and how it made me feel as a person. The hard work that the all the sweat that you put into it and you see that you've accomplished something cause it's, it's really a sport about how much can you put yourself through and come out on the other side of it. And you know if your talent level allows you to be a 4:20 miler than you should go be a 4:20 miler. If your talent level allows you to be a five minute miler, then you should go be a five minute miler. I think there are those things that can keep a kid motivated. I learned real quick here, as I said earlier, you got to earn it and you don't earn it by talking. You earn it by doing.

Andy: [13:03](#) And then once you start doing, people respect what you do when they see you out there practicing hard and you know, practicing for two plus hours or getting in the weight room maybe in the morning because you got to do a workout in the afternoon or you get done with the meet and you're cooling down an extra two miles because that's what you need to do. I think there's a sense of pride with that. And I think the kids that I was fortunate enough to coach bought into that and it really made them feel like they were earning something. And then I think when they started competing with schools and we started achieving, hm. Not, not a ton of success, but enough that they felt like, hey, we're, we're legit. [inaudible] when we go to a meet, people know that we're there. We're not just one of the others. We're actually one of the, you know, maybe the top five schools or whatever the case is. And so I think they really took a lot of pride in that. And we talked a lot about, you can't compare yourself to other, other sports. I mean that was, I mean, cause if you don't, that's what happens. And the other sports are working just as hard as we are. Right? It's not that you're out working everybody, it's just that they're working hard. It's just different. So

Gary: [14:20](#) I asked Kevin Banich this in our very first episode. of course he's had coached track and field and you know, when you have a student who you want them to be more successful than they want to be, what do you do? How do you motivate them? Surely you've had an instance where you've had a kid that you saw their potential, and they didn't see it or they struggled to see it, but you did. And so how do you get that to them to say, hey, you be better than you are?

Andy: [14:52](#) I think the key is getting them to not know that they're starting to love it or want it and to, I don't want to say trick them, but I feel like if you go too far above and beyond convincing them that they're great, you're almost giving it to them. Whereas opposed to getting them to earn it, putting them in situations where, like for example, in coaching, I might throw a kid with a group higher than what they've been training with and then they last in that workout or they survive it and then all of a sudden they're like, hmm. And then maybe bring them back down to the next group and then they kind of thirst. They want that. maybe a student in class, who I see maybe a little more potential. I put them with a student who is a pretty strong student and they're still having a good conversation with them, a running conversation where they're like, Hey, I'm, I'm right there with this person.

Andy: [15:47](#) So they see that they belong. But I think the part that they probably lack is the endurance to do that day in and day out. So you kind of gotta build that up gradually or else very few kids can just pop up there and stay.

Gary: [16:02](#) You're talking about teaching being a math teacher. Was that always something that you wanted to do or how did that come to be?

Andy: [16:08](#) Had no idea. No idea. I knew I was good at math. I, my sister had gone to a year of college and I, neither of my parents did. They were worked on the farm, I mean, that's just what I think a lot of people in our community did. so I, I just knew I was gonna run. I knew as I was, and I needed money to go to school. I wasn't gonna just, be able to go to college without that.

Andy: [16:32](#) So I knew I was good at math. I figured business probably made sense. And then I sat through my first accounting class. I was like, yeah, no, I, it just didn't, I totally get that. I didn't just didn't do it for me.

I was right and I really enjoyed school. I, I say that from the standpoint of I enjoyed the athletics, my friends at, you know, not just, you know, not necessarily the academic day grind that you have, but just the whole, whole environment of school. I really enjoyed it. And, and my most influential people were my coaches. And I talked to them and you know, I got great advice from one of my coaches who taught and he said, hey, if you want to go into teaching, he goes, just remember you'll never be rich. You'll never be poor. You'll be somewhere in the middle if you're okay with that.

Andy: [17:18](#) He goes, but if you love it, you'll love it. And I, I switched to education and knew that was it. It was good.

Gary: [17:25](#) There are a number of teachers in a building, whether it's our building or any building who demand the respect of the students. And you have that. I was gonna introduce you as one of the nicest guys that I know, and you are, and you have this way about you, that kids that take your class, they're going to work hard. They're going to have to earn it. So talk a little bit about how you've developed that.

Andy: [17:49](#) Thanks for the compliment. Well, thank you. I think it's over time. I don't think I would expect a student in mind to do anything that I wouldn't do. And, I think it's a lot of preparation as far as trying to anticipate what questions they might have or, and I think the same with, with coaching.

Andy: [18:08](#) I really do. I think if, if your, if your athletes know that it's, it's honest, sincere effort you're putting in, they're more likely to give the same back. And, and I, I, I think I'm honest with my students. I, I like to have a good time in class. I like to, you know, it's a grind. It's going to be, it's work. but that's the only way I know to get better and learn. And so I think I, I'm usually up front and honest with them as far as that goes. And, I also think I approach it as a, you're going to get in, you're gonna get out of it what you put into it. And at the end of the day, you can look around all you want, but more than likely the person in the mirror is the one that you can look at as far as the most responsible for your success.

Andy: [18:57](#) And that's a good thing though, because when a, when a kid does well, that's the same truth of he days, they earned it. It wasn't me that earned it. It wasn't, you know, our parents that earned it, the jeans they get, they earned it. And I think if it's too easy, there's no worth in earning it. But if it's too difficult, then you kinda, you run into maybe losing confidence. And so I think that that balance of trying to put them in a position that they have to earn it, but then once they do, they're like, hey, I, I feel good about that. And they're willing to do the work. And when they don't do well, most of the time they trace it back to, yeah, I didn't put in the effort and I, I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna ride them on that. They, they know.

Andy: [19:43](#) Am I disappointed? Absolutely. For sure. I don't, I mean, I've, you know, I think disappointment sometimes hurts more than, getting upset with someone or just saying, yeah, I've, I thought you could do that.

Gary: [19:54](#) What's it feel like when a kid goes off to college and they have had you in class and you've prepared them for that next step? And they come back and say, hey, Mr. Niewedde, thank you for doing that. Making me work as a maybe as hard as are harder than I thought I could. I'm sure that's happened. Talk a little bit about what that means to, you?

Andy: [20:13](#) That's the best. It's the when, when, when, when my old coach told me, you'll never be rich and never be poor, but you're really gonna like it. And then another coach of mine, who was probably my most influential person that I had, who just retired this year actually. he, he said, the heart is what makes it good. And so when a former student comes back and says, Hey, the those, those lessons they paid off, whether it was what they learned in class or, being able to embrace the grind, just it makes, you know, all right, it's worth it. Even just one, one a year, you're just like, all right, I made it better. That's, that's the goal I made. I made a, you know, I tried to make them a little better. And, that, that's the, I think that's the most gratifying part of what it is that I do, or I think any teacher does.

Gary: [21:09](#) Andy, we're going to take a break and we'll be back on the Rebel Five podcast with Andy Niewedde.

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Gary: [21:47](#) We're back with Andy Niewedde on the Rebel Five podcast. Andy, thanks for being here today. We really appreciate you sharing some of your Roncalli stories, some of your career stories. And speaking of Roncalli, do you have a special Roncalli connection now? I know that could open up all kinds of different opportunities here for you to comment, but, there's someone in particular that you've met here that, might be your answer. I'm just going to say that.

Andy: [22:16](#) Yeah, I guess my wife Linda, that was that I picked up on that, so, yeah. Yeah. I met her when, when I, she had been here five, five years I believe. And then when I, yeah, when I started teaching here, then yeah, we met and two years later we were married. I figured I, I didn't think that I would be here as long as I have been kind of one of those deals where you're like, okay, I've got an opportunity to be a head coach, teach math, I'm going to be here a couple of years, probably migrate down toward home, whatever. You know, just, just the natural, I guess thing that most people think of. A lot of my former teammates were in the area, so I got a chance to, you know, train with them in the area here at home Indy and the areas, a lot of my former butler teammates I should say. And so we were still running competitively, so we would get, be able to get together and work out. And a lot of them actually were teaching and coaching as well. So it was, it was a nice little group. And then, met Linda and that whole thing changed. And and we've been, we've lived in the same place last, 21 since we'd been married 21 years now.

Gary: [23:30](#) Why, why didn't you look harder to leave,

Andy: [23:34](#) I think I talked earlier about a little bit about how it fit me, like my ideals and what coaching was here and even teaching was what you could expect of kids and not necessarily the person I was in high school, but I think the person I became, I'd never looked, you know, once I was here, I was, I was happy, I felt challenged. I felt like I was making a difference. And I just never, it just never occurred to me once. I was kind of ingrained in it that I was and I think Chuck was so he was in his first few years as principal at that time we had just kind of started the president principal model. Right. but I felt like there was a good group, a the people that I was able to coach with and hang around and people that mentored me.

Andy: [24:29](#) it just all felt right. And so I just, every year I never, never thought at the end of the year I'm going to go look for a job down south or hey Linda, how about if we, what do you think? Cause she was the same way. I mean we were both coaching so we were both, we were all in mean you're here. And she, she was teaching driver's Ed. I mean we were summertime, we were here just as much as we were during school and our friends were too. And so it was just all kind of all part of it.

Gary: [24:59](#) You've had a, a wonderful career as a cross country coach and track and field coach and you retired from that, two years ago. Three years ago now it's been five. Oh my gosh. Yeah. How about that? Five years ago. Yeah. Why did you step away?

Andy: [25:17](#) knew, I was going to become co-chair. The department with Flora, Linda was at is at Irvington and not coaching. It just opened up opportunities as far as the summer. It's like anything else. I mean, if you're going to do it, you do it right and the summers as important as any other time to develop athletes. And so I just, I just knew it was time to kind of move, move in another direction because we've, we've been able to spend a lot more time together. We don't have kids, but we really enjoy traveling together, working outside together. A lot of things because we're both teachers. We have, we have a lot of opportunity to be together and we enjoy it. And so I knew that would be an opportunity to do that. And she has commented that department chair doesn't mean anything different as far as schedule wise during the school year, which is probably true. You're still doing, it's just different. You're not outside coaching until five 30 or six or whatever, but you're, you're working on department things. But the summertime is where I think I noticed the biggest difference and the weekends every Saturday or to the right. And you're tired when you come home and you want to take a nap. And

Gary: [26:37](#) I have been the beneficiary of one of your hobbies. as well as many of us are here in the building, gardening, we have a garden out here at the Providence House. right now that you were instrumental in putting in a talk about that, that a hobby of yours. Cause like I said, many of us are the beneficiary of that?

Andy: [27:00](#) Well to it as much to do with my wife as well and her sister because they love to put them out. And my sister in law actually has a little quasi greenhouse where she starts the plants in February, March. So we're able to put the tomatoes in the ground and they're ready to go. I think it's really just a way to be outside because I was so used to that growing up. I don't think when I was growing up that I really enjoyed the garden. I know I enjoyed being outside and even though like I enjoyed things like putting up hay and I think for the feeling it gave me that it was a day of hard work and made me feel good about working hard. and probably watching my dad and knowing that, that, that there's a value placed on that. Right? And so I think it's just one of those little things that you do that keeps you in touch with what you were way back when. Right. So I think that's kind of how it all came about. And I'm sure there's going to be a time when we're going to downsize our garden or, but there's something, something neat about being able to take some extra produce to friends, give it to your neighbors. A lot of our neighbors are retired so they don't have gardens anymore. So, and they, you know, they'll watch our house and we're going, you know, just, it's, it's nice to be able to give back to, to people and it's a way that's enjoyable for us.

Gary: [28:21](#) 2014. You retired so I want to go back to your coaching career a little bit. Do you have a, maybe the proud, proud moment is above all others when you talk about your career as a coach here at Roncalli?

Andy: [28:34](#) Lots of them. I feel bad cause I know I'm going to leave, you know, I'm going to leave people. or teams or moments out, because there are so many instrumental moments or just, just things that happened that you felt like, wow, that was a big moment. That was a big deal to that kid or that group. I would say the boys team that first made it to the semi-state was Doug Higgins and Jeff Sadam and Daniel Campton and Thomas Abel and Chad Horty. Those were the five instrumental guys on that team. So three seniors, a junior and a sophomore. And our program had been through, they had been through a lot of failure. Right. And they had to get back up.

Gary: [29:19](#) I just want our listeners to know that you don't have anything in front of you that's all off the top of your head, which I think is pretty amazing because those guys obviously meant a lot to you.

Andy: [29:29](#) Oh. And still like, cause we, the way our regional set up it, it's a, it's competitive. It's like anything else around here. I think that that, you know, our sports teams are in competitive fields. had to beat, we knew going in, we had to beat a ranked team as we knew we had to do that. The team that we knew we probably had to beat, we're going to have the top two runners in the race. So we were going to have to observe, able to be able to absorb that. And a lot of pressure on guys like Thomas [inaudible] who's a sophomore at the time to perform because that's what we're going to make our difference. And so that group gets through that year and we didn't Miss A, in my coaching tenure, we didn't miss another semi-state the rest of the way. And there's no way that that would've happened.

Andy: [30:18](#) They weren't necessarily, I think the best thing they s they still have the four by eight record, but as far as cross country team weren't the most accomplished. But it's really hard to, it's really hard to look back and think there was a bigger moment for the boys program than them doing it. When they, they, they had, like I said, they had to be the rank team and they had to beat a team that was really good up front and, and they accepted it and, and did it. And like I said, that group of seniors, we had been trying and trying and trying and trying and had never broken through. And every year you get to pick up the pieces and train harder and that's really hard after you're disappointed to find the motivation to, all right, you know, it's going to be winter and we got to get out there and get after it. So very proud of them.

Gary: [31:06](#) I talked to Mike. Michael Wantz recently and so we're in a conference now. the boys basketball program won the conference the first first year in the conference and that can never be taken, taken away. Your, your the first champion, right? We were never in a conference when you were coaching, but how important would that have been? What would that have been? Because the, you would have had Brebeuf so good strong program.

Chatard Pretty, pretty good. Very good program. So you still would have had a very good competitive, group to, to, to run against. Yeah.

Andy: [31:43](#) That group would've been that conference at the time that these guys were going through the current IU Cross country coach Andrew Porr was leading a group of Chatard guys that were state champs in a four by eight. You're talking, I mean that was that. So that group in track, it's kind of funny cause they would've been seniors when Jason Warner and that group were juniors. So we had a really good track team that year. The distance when we would go to like the all Catholic meet, which is probably a quasi conference meet back in the day. Yeah. Daniel Camden ran four 24 that night and got fourth in the mile. He breaks the school record and gets fourth in the mile and you know, he left the meet scoring like eight points and he had a great night and it's just the nature of it. So that conference would have been great. It would have been fun for each group to have something maybe to point toward. Maybe those does teams that had to follow Franklin central warren central through the tournament would add something to hang their hat on a little bit. that would've been nice.

Andy: [32:46](#) But, and I don't, I don't want to forget though, when you asked about proud moments cause another one, like I also was fortunate enough to coach Steph Greer and I think there's not a moment that necessarily makes me proud in her career, but just the idea, and I always, always have to catch myself when people talk about how great of an athlete she was, her hidden talent was her willingness to work. And I think sometimes when somebody has a lot of accomplishments, they always kind of overlook that. And I don't, I've never coached a kid that's worked harder than her. I've coached kids that maybe have, have worked bout as hard but never, I mean, so that I think her career and how she reacted to setbacks and managed herself cause she played golf and ran cross in the fall. How she managed herself was probably a very proud, proud moment. And I guess

Gary: [33:45](#) You've been here for 21 years. You're a relatively young guy. what's the future look like?

Andy: [33:53](#) Wow, that's a great loaded question. we're, you know, my wife and I have always enjoyed being warm and I've enjoyed the winters less and less. So I would say I will probably not finish my teaching career in Indiana. Right. We'll probably finish it somewhere south. The timing on that, I don't know. But, but as I've, you know, told Chuck each year that we, we finish up, I'm like back next year and here we go. I mean that's, that's all I know is right, is come back and let's, we're all in. Let's go.

Gary: [34:25](#) Well, we're thrilled to have you here. And, as I mentioned earlier, You're just one of those teachers that, our kids enjoy having a, for me in my, my day here at Roncalli, Tim Puntarelli was that kind of teacher where you knew, you were going to be tested and, and so to be in that company is high praise in my, my mind. So, we're going to go to our break and we're going to come back with the Rebel 5ive questions with Andy Niewedde.

Break: [34:56](#) Rebel 5ive is sponsored by Steve's flowers and gifts for the best and freshest flowers in Indianapolis and surrounding areas. Steve's flowers and gifts have exactly what you're looking for for your next special occasion called Steve's flowers at 800-742-9359.

Gary: [35:26](#) We're back with Andy Niewedde on the Rebel 5ive podcast. Andy before we go into the Rebel 5ive questions, being a young teacher back in the early 2000's, I'm sure there were people in the building who mentored you to kind of get you acclimated to Roncalli and all the ways that we do things. talk a little bit about that, cause I know there were some, some people that were very important to you back then.

Andy: [35:51](#) Yeah, I would say from the teaching perspective, our department chair was Mary Reille who was at a very high bar. So it was very important to me that I, I really, I wanted her to know that I was here to teach, not just coach. And so I felt like every day I was kind of on a mission to show her that I was, I was a good teacher and I think she appreciated and respected that idea. Even though she knew I was very committed to coaching as well. And so I felt like she set the bar at a level that all of our teachers in the department had to raise their game to get to.



Andy: [36:35](#) And if you didn't, not only was she let you know about it that you felt like you let somebody down. Right. And so, and I think she was instrumental in setting that bar because when I came in, so Angie Toner obviously a great teacher Sr. Anne, great teacher, Cindy Flight at the time who's gone on to Hamilton southeastern, I believe, great teacher. Like I'm surrounded by a lot of very good. And I think Mary is, is probably a big reason for that. And then coaching wise, all the people I've mentioned before, the John Wirtz, Bruce Scifres, Kathy Nalley Schembra, Bob Kirkhoff being able to look at them and say, okay, I want to, I want to build a program that's worthy of them to notice or say, hey, this is a legitimate program that's working hard. And, and so to me it was very important, you know, John Wirtz would see me maybe the day Monday after a meet and would know how we had performed.

Andy: [37:35](#) And to me that said he was watching, he was looking, that it meant enough to him to look in the paper and to remember it. And then the comment to me that Monday, that was a sign of respect and it really meant a lot. Bruce would ask how we did, I mean, just, just some conversations that you would have that you knew that the icons in the building were also taking note or watching. And that was important to me and I, you know, gives you that extra oomph, right? That extra, you know, hey, I'm making a difference. you know, Rob Krataska not only sent me out with a place to live when I first got here. he, I lived with him for a year before when Linda and I were still dating. And then before we got married, coached with him. and then he took over the boys track and field program and we were really good. I was an assistant. Then we kind of switched, right around the time Linda and I got married and he was always just, just the details. So there was always somebody there. I felt that that gave me a pat on the back or gave me a little boost or some advice on, hey, this is how we're successful. But then also, hey, at Roncalli , here's how we're successful. And then, you know, Bob Tully was, he's Bob Tully, I mean, he drove her once he was done coaching football, he, he drove the bus for Cross and was always, outstanding. So all those guys, well and Jim Padgent before that. So he coached softball. He was our bus driver, right. For years. and I think he, he kind of started as that cause Gerard Striby , he was my first assistant coach.

Gary: [39:15](#) Well, I think that's, a characteristic I hope of Roncalli . everybody Kinda circling the wagons in supporting each other and, and the, you named some pretty iconic names there. So, we're going to go into the Rebel Five questions, Andy. So let's begin with in another life, what would you want to be or do?

Andy: [39:35](#) Well, in today's world, I think I would be a statistician for a pro sports team. Like that would really like that. I don't, I wouldn't even have thought of that as a little kid growing up. Right. But now I'm like an, I teach AP stats and I'm like, wow, this would be pretty cool to was sports stats class or to do this. or I'll be honest, I still, I still miss driving the tractor even though I didn't like it at times growing up. Right. Like maybe I could do it now. Today's farms are pretty big and they're almost like a little companies. If I could farm 500 acres and have my own plot, I'd do that.

Gary: [40:06](#) I get that idea. Just being on your tractor and you know, just kind of in your own world and thinking about things. I totally understand that. number two, what is the funniest thing that has happened to you recently? I felt like every day something funny happens to me. Linda's pretty funny. I mean, Gosh, I don't know about the funniest thing. Every day something fun happens I'm going to have to pass. I can make, I'm drawing a blank on that one and just, yeah,

Andy: [40:35](#) That's a favorite time or place where you've run into a Roncalli person. You know, the airport is usually where I'll run into somebody and I'll just, it'll be somebody that I haven't seen. And then if it's a former student, it's remembering the name. And so I feel like that's a common occurrence. If I'm going somewhere, it's a given that I'm going to bump into somebody or, we were going on a spring training trip. I was leaving on like a Friday morning to fly out to Phoenix to watch the reds and my wife and my mother-in-law and myself, and I see a fellow teacher walking. I'm thinking, Hey, you shouldn't be out of school.

Gary: [41:16](#) What do you wish you could tell your younger self?

Andy: [41:20](#) I would say put the pedal down and just ignore the noise. Yeah. When you're younger, you're always kind of apprehensive of, of what if I fail, put the pedal down and go. I think that's probably the, that attribute I admire the most in all the, like the kids that I've coached and, and the, the, the people I've been on a, a

part of a team with that I've really respected the most is they didn't feel, they didn't fear failure. They just said, I'm gonna, I'm gonna go in, give it what I got. And if it comes up short, it comes up short and then don't listen to all the stuff that goes on around because 80% of it's really not that accurate and didn't really pertain to us anyway. Yeah, that was good stuff.

Gary: [41:58](#) Life Advice, I mean, life advice.

Andy: [42:01](#) Yeah. I'd say just from my upbringing I guess. But, you want to work hard, expect to be given nothing and then don't make excuses. I mean, life happens, mistakes happen, but you just turn around and, and get back up and go after it. Really when you make excuses, it's just wasting, wasting energy.

Gary: [42:22](#) I want to thank you for being part of the Rebel Five podcast. at one point in the episode I, I talked about you being one of the nicest guys I know and I believe that I still believe that and you have an aura about you in a very good way. You are, one of our, most liked teachers in the building and I just want to thank you for, for being such a big part of Roncalli in the last 21 years. And I hope you're around for a long, long time and, I just want to thank you for being part of the podcast today. You have the final floor. Any final words?

Andy: [42:59](#) You know that I'd say the one person that doesn't get mentioned in my, like when we go through the questions or what did, when I was thinking about, you know, mentor coaches or, mentor teachers is probably a little bit of everything. It's probably Chuck. Cause [inaudible] when Chuck interviews you, he sells you on Roncalli. That's what he does and you're sold, you're, you're in and then you get here and he's the real deal. I mean he, he kinda, you know, I talked about how I felt Roncalli is a fit for me. He was a fit for me too because I felt like I wanted to work hard and go earn it and go get it. And he was like, go do it. And it was never, there were times when, you know, I expected a lot of our student athletes and maybe disciplined somebody that didn't necessarily like it and Chuck was right there to support you and, and, and the big picture was seen and, he was always has always been supportive and just, that passion I think shines through. And I've really, I've really enjoyed that part of working for him and with him, over the past. 21 years, he goes by in a flash. Right. I think back to when I got here and St Jude hadn't built a church yet. Yeah. The fields behind were just fields, corn fields.

Gary: [44:22](#) Well, bringing up Chuck. I mean there's certainly a mutual respect there. There was a period of time in your career here, Roncalli, where you left for a couple of years and you came back. how long did it take for Chuck to say yes?

Andy: [44:38](#) Yeah, that, yeah, you would not, not long I guess. I it was, it was, it was mutual. I mean we, you know, it's one of those things where you feel something's a good fit and, and you, and I think he felt the same and it was, you know, in classic form. I, I have yet to get a teaching job where I have filled out an application that, how about that? That's something else. Something to be said for like word of mouth or somebody lets you know, or you go in and talk to someone. And then the application that maybe I had to fill out was after the interview that I, you know, a formality, but I never have, I've taken a job where I have actually turned in the application and then they called me back. So.

Gary: [45:27](#) Well that says a lot. And we will finish with that. And thanks again for being here today for being part of the Rebel Five podcast. Good luck, school starts and the just, well, by the time this is aired, we'll be in school most likely. So good luck this year and Go Rebels! .Thanks for having me. I appreciate it.

Gary: [45:48](#) I'm Gary Armbruster and thanks for joining us today for this episode of the Rebel Five podcast. To find out more information about the podcast, please visit [50.roncalli.org/podcast.php](http://50.roncalli.org/podcast.php). Again, thanks so much for joining us today and until next time, We'll fight ahead!