

# McIntyre lands Stevenson post

By Brad Emons Staff writer

Livonia Stevenson's boys basketball program will have a different look. It was announced Tuesday that Franklin's Jim McIntyre is the school's new coach, replacing George Van Wagoner, who retired at the end of last season as one of the state's winningest coaches with a career record of 494-207.

"Mac's" credentials are flawless and you'll see an exciting brand of basketball," said Stevenson athletic director Roger Frayer. "We feel he's the best choice right now for the job." "We interviewed three solid candidates who are proven coaches and motivators. We're pleased to get somebody with as much experience as Jim to follow a legend like George Van Wagoner."

Frayer was part of a five-person search committee along with Stevenson principal Dale Collier, his two assistants, Mary Breen and J. Stephen Smith, and Van Wagoner. Also interviewed Monday were longtime Stevenson JV coach Jim George and former Bentley coach Jim Komula.

McINTYRE SPENT the past eight seasons as Franklin's varsity coach. His best season came in 1981-82 when Franklin won the Northwest Suburban League crown and posted a 16-5 record.

A fiery coach, McIntyre's Franklin teams used the fast-break and full-court pressing defenses almost exclusively during his reign.

McIntyre's son, John, is also well known throughout the area. He was a consensus all-state guard at Redford Catholic Central and will attend the University of Detroit this fall.

"I sure hope to meet the new challenges at Stevenson," said McIntyre. "George had good success there, and I

hope it continues." With the closing this week of Bentley High School, teachers and administrators in the Livonia school district waited until last week to find out new building assignments.

McINTYRE, a health and physical education teacher, was bumped from Franklin's staff to Stevenson.

"I'm getting a full-time teaching position at Stevenson and that gave me an opportunity to apply," he said. "Everything kind of fell into place and knowing Dale (Collier) was principal at Franklin didn't hurt."

"But coaching is more than being there on Tuesday and Friday nights. Being in the building where you coach has a lot of benefits."

McIntyre, however, regrets leaving Franklin. "I had some good years at Franklin and I had some good kids," McIntyre said. "We weren't always big, but we scrapped."

"And George Lovich was a super AD (athletic director) and I had all the support I needed. There were a lot of friends, and it's a good faculty, and I'll miss that."

"But this gave me an opportunity to stay in coaching and I hope to stay for years and build a program."

McINTYRE ADMITS there may be a period of adjustment for him and the players.

George (Van Wagoner) is a different personality than me," McIntyre said. "My intensity level is different. But the thing George and I have in common is that we have the best interests in the kids."

The hiring of McIntyre by Stevenson means that Franklin is searching for a new coach.

With many summer basketball programs beginning Monday, Lovich will be pressed for time to find a new successor to McIntyre.

# Franklin odyssey ends with jolt

By Brad Emons staff writer



Carolyn Smith walks dejectedly off the field Monday with coach Joe Epstein after Franklin lost the Class A final 5-0 to L'Anse Creuse.

Livonia Franklin got in Chris Harms' way but couldn't finish the job Monday in the state Class A softball championship at Lansing's Ranney Park.

L'Anse Creuse North, behind the clutch pitching of Harms and timely hitting from her teammates, dashed the Patriots' dreams of a state title, 5-0.

Harms, considered the state's premier pitcher, gave up seven hits and was the victim of four errors. But she was tough in pressure situations.

"We just didn't hit in the clutch, and they made it count when they had people on," said Franklin coach Joe Epstein, whose team finished with a sparkling 25-4 record.

Franklin squandered three bases-loaded opportunities and left 10 runners stranded in a loss that proved to be more than frustrating.

"We did hit her (Harms)," said Epstein. "We didn't beat ourselves. It was a matter of hitting."

"But I'm very proud of these girls and we'll be back next year."

FRANKLIN'S JUNIOR ACE, Tracy Letcka, came into the game with three consecutive four-hit tournament shutouts. But on this day, she didn't have her best stuff and was roughed up for 11 hits.

"I told the girls not to swing at Letcka's change-up (pitch)," said North coach Jerry Donnelly, whose team finished 22-6 overall. "I told them to wait for the fast stuff. Some of those girls who got the hits today hadn't been hitting the ball this year."

"Franklin was a good team, and I give them credit for putting us in pressure situations. They never gave up."

L'Anse Creuse scored a run in the first inning on a double by Karl Sonntag followed by a Leslie Grimes single.

In the top of the second, No. 8 hitter Lisa Sokolowski, a thorn in Letcka's side, singled home Tracy Osborne to make it 2-0.

Franklin threatened in the bottom half of the inning with one out on singles by Kris Roman and Beth Stewart, followed by a North infield error to load the bases.

But Harms got out of the jam, fanning Terri Obey and getting Sue Panzl on a fly out.

BOTH TEAMS went down quietly the next two innings. But North cranked up its bats again in the fifth for two runs on a triple by Amy Beagy, a double by Bonnie Kacer and a triple by Grimes — all hard-hit balls.

In the bottom half of the 4th, Franklin mounted its most serious threat of the afternoon with one out.

Cherie Mascarello was safe on an error, Sue Panzl doubled and Letcka walked to load the bases. Carolyn Smith then ripped a shot past the first baseman, but Letcka, running from first to second, couldn't get out of the way of the grounder as the ball caromed off her leg. She was ruled out.

Harms then fanned Maria Vasellou to end the inning.

"That could have led to a big inning and a couple of runs," said Epstein of the dead ball play. "It was a tough break because the ball was hit hard."

North added an insurance run in the sixth to go ahead 5-0.

Franklin loaded the bases again in the bottom half of the inning but came up empty-handed.

In the bottom of the seventh, Smith singled with one out but was nulled on a throw by Grimes on a throw from first to third for a game-ending double play.

"WE'VE BEEN shutting teams down with the runners on second and third — no out — and with the bases loaded all season long," said Donnelly. "We've just been able to bear down when we had to. We've been doing that that way all year."

# Niemi gets Canton job

By Brad Emons Staff writer

Plymouth Canton's search for a boys basketball coach ended Thursday when Tom Niemi was named to replace Dave Van Wagoner.

Niemi is no stranger to the area, having coached the past two seasons at Livonia Bentley, which is closing its doors for good this week.

The announcement of Niemi's hiring was made Friday by Plymouth-Canton Schools assistant athletic director Paul Cummings.

"Tom's had an outstanding record wherever he's gone, and he's the best candidate at this time for Canton basketball," said Cummings.

Niemi, 43, teaches law, home and family courses and business arithmetic at Belleville High School, where he coached varsity basketball for 10 years (1973-83).

Prior to that, Niemi coached junior varsity basketball from 1969 to 1973 at Livonia Franklin. He is a native of

Neaunee, Mich. (in the Upper Peninsula).

"I'M LOOKING FORWARD to getting started, but right now I'm kind of scrambling," Niemi told the Observer-Friday afternoon. "I know Canton had a lot of people graduate, and they had an excellent team two years ago."

Van Wagoner stepped down after four seasons and a 41-41 career record. The highlight of his brief stint was the 1982-84 season when he guided the Chiefs to a 16-6 record and a Western Lakes Conference title.

Van Wagoner resigned because he said he couldn't run an effective basketball program without being in the high school building. (He teaches at Lowell Middle School.)

Niemi took the Bentley job during the 1983-84 season and led the Bulldogs to the Class A regional finals despite a sub-.500 season. His team upset Livonia Stevenson that year for the district crown.

# Observerland kickers eye 3rd O&E title

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And Plymouth Canton's Beth Frigge. THE ECCENTRIC team includes Athens players Cindy Wass, Selahag Brett, Kathleen Guzinski, Kameron Kottelut and Kelly Wuchuk; Troy's Carol Green, Liz Suttle and Emily Riemer; Bloomfield Hills Andover's Carrie Bree and Beth Longo; Birmingham Marian's Betsy Clement, Angel Capaldi and Kate Ferguson; Seaholm's Andraea; West Bloomfield's Karen Bednark and Bloomfield Hills Lahser's Neala McInerney.

Hussey, the No. 1 player in the state, scored 98 goals and added 59 assists during her career. This year, she scored 16 goals and had 11 assists.

Ruggiero, in two years with Mercy, scored 64 goals and had 41 assists in 33 games.

Broccardo and Montroy lead the Observer defense, while Brett and Green lead the Eccentric defense.

Andraea and Wass are leading

scorers for the Eccentric team. This season, Andraea had 21 goals and 25 assists, while Wass scored 33 goals and added 17 assists.

Troy Athens High School is at 4333 John R., just north of Wattles (17 Mile Road). John R. is four miles east of Coolidge.

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