Plymouth-Canton picks AD

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

Ten years ago John Sandmann convinced a Plymouth High School assistant football coach to shelve his plans of becomming the first head football coach at Plymouth Canton High School.

Sandmann convinced Paul Cummings that he'd be happier in the role of assistant athletic director. Cummings decided Sandmann was right.

Last Monday, the Plymouth-Canton Cummunity Schools board of education made Cummings' decision pay off by unanimously selecting him as the new athletic director of Plymouth-Canton schools.

He replaces Sandmann who retired in June after 37 years of service to the district.

"Obviously, I'm very excited about this," Cummings said. "I've waited a long time for this. I've paid my dues."

Indeed. Cummings came to the district in 1959 as the assistant director of community education. From 1964 to 1973, he coached swimming, football and baseball. Since 1969 he has been the director of swimming in the community education department.

He decided to give up coaching in 1974 to become assistant director of athletics.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT Norman Kee was given the task of heading up a committee to help select the new AD. Along with Kent Bulkema, Bill Brown, Shirley Spaniel and Dr. Michael Homes, *Kee screened 32 applicants for the job.*

In a letter to the board of education, Kee wrote: "The top internal and external candidates were interviewed extensively. The results were unanimous that the person who can provide the comprehensive leadership as a director and deal most quickly and effectively with the issues and requirements of the job description is Paul Cummings."

Superintendent Dr. John Hoben, according to Kee, "support(ed) this recommendation without hesitation."

The board accepted it without hesitation, as well.

The role Cummings will fill will be different than the one Sandmann vacated. On top of his AD chores, Cummings will also be the coordinating director of both physical education K-12 and health education K-12.

"AS FAR AS how I'm going to handle this job," Cummings said, "it's going to take a while before I can instill my ideas. Let's face it, John Sandmann was here a long time, and things were done his way a long time. And that's good. He took a tiny little school here and built a dynasty. The biggest thing for me is to keep that going. I want that to continue.

"I will want to instill a few changes, but that will come in time. Right now, I just want to make sure we open on time."

Cummings is both aware of and unafraid of perhaps the biggest headache his new job could cause: satisfying both Plymouth Canton and Plymouth Salem factions.

"I can live with the situation," he said. "I can direct it and make it work. Ninety-nine percent of the coaching staff are workable, dynamic people. They handle themselves in a professional manner."

Cummings said the attitude of the students, in terms of the Canton-Salem friction, is the best it's ever been.

"They may not talk to each other much during the week they play each other, but they get along very well the rest of the time. I'm very pleased with the students. The parents sometimes get ner*vous when they think we have purchased something* for the other school. But, whatever we buy for one program, we make sure we buy for the other," he said.

ANOTHER ISSUE consistently barking at the AD's door is what priority the district administration puts on its athletic program.

"You have to remember that athletics is a part of the total education process," Cummings said. "It's our job to be teaching youngsters, not using them."

But, Cummings is committed to keeping the Plymouth-Canton athletic teams competitive on the state level.

"I feel you will be competitive if you have the right foundation," he said. "Number one, you have to work with the Canton and Salem students. They are your top priority. Number two, you must win your conference. If you can attain those two things, you have to be pleased. Everything that comes after that is gravy. And the other things will come. I've seen it happen.

"I will never deny Plymouth-Canton teams the chance to compete on the state level. We want to be there. You just can't skip a step to get there."

Cummings is adamant about keeping the middle school and freshman athletic programs alive.

"We have kind of turned that problem around in recent years," he said. "I hope to keep it that way."

What Cummings brings to the post, aside from his quick wit and pleasant demeanor, is a familiarity with both the job and people he'll be associating with — a familiarity that should help smooth out the transition from assistant to head man.

Records tumble, Whalers do, too

swimming

Records continue to fall for the Woodbrooke Swim Club, although the victories haven't followed suit.

In a recent 300-270 loss to Beechwoods, Liz Worthen set a new 13-14 age group 50-meter backstroke mark with a 35.2.

Thursday, in a 294-272 loss to Pleasant Ridge, the Whalers set a new 40-year combined age relay record. Shelly McCaffrey, Carrie Worthen, Anna Palmer and Jeff McCaffrey teamed on a 1:17.52.

Liz Worthen, Cindy Cramer, Chris Roeseler, Jeff McCaffrey, Carrie Worthen, Scott Mayotte, Marge Cramer and Mike Turney won a pair of events each for Woodbrooke.

Single winners were Keith Lee, Erica Vincent, Kristin Kranz, Dave Anderson, Marcy Mulbarger, Lynn Leslie and Darci Lehmann.

sports shorts

● THE FORCE

The Farmington Force boys under 15 soccer team are the champions of the Bonanza Premier Soccer League.

The Force, coached by Del Van Vliet of Farmington Hills, finished the league season with a 7-3 record, besting second place Birmingham-Bloomfield Blazers by a point.

The Force was 12-5 overall on the season.

"We are extremely proud of our record," Van Vliet said. "To win this premier soccer league championship, especially in our first year, is truly an accomplishment."

Meet the Force: Jeff Petoskey, Walter Seidel and Ya Mok from Southfield; Tim Russell from Livonia; Mike Karfis from Northville; Ruben Martinez from Union Lake; Tim Waker and Adam Krause from Farmington; Craig Bailey, Brian Fitzgerald, Jim Hill, Steve Hill, David Quarterman, Brett Wills, Peter van Vliet and Gary Wegner from Farmington Hills.

● ROADRUNNER CLASSIC

The annual Roadrunner Classic, a 5-mile run through Livonia, is set for 6:30 p.m. Saturday, July 27.

The entry fee is $10 until July 22. Late entry is $12.

The flat 5-mile course begins at the Livonia Family Y on Stark Road off I-96 between Farmington and Levan.

Check in time is 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Call Randy Step, 769-5016, or Ellen Henry, 535-6830, for more information.

The event is sponsored by the Redford Road Runners.

● COACHES SOUGHT

The Farmington Public School District is accepting applications for non-teaching coaching positions for the fall of 1985. Postions open are girls basketball, boys and girls cross country, freshmen football and junior varsity soccer.

Resumes should be sent to Ron Holland, 32500 Shiawassee, Farmington, 48024 or call 471-6337 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays.

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Men's doubles: Dan Walsh-Jeff Greenbery def. Rob Martin-Tom Spede, 6-3, 6-3.
Women's doubles: Jo Ann Stremore-Michele Anderson def. Penny Wasiak-Mary Ann Grecu, 6-1, 6-4.
Men's singles: Jeff Greenbery def. Rob Martin, 6-2, 6-0.
Women's singles: Joan Cloner def. Carol Noel (retired).

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