

Neu quits as Canton girls coach

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Rob Neu said it was the toughest decision he ever had to make.

After four successful years as Plymouth Canton varsity girls basketball coach, Neu resigned last week to pursue a career in business.

His departure also ends a three-year stint as boys track coach. A replacement for either position has not been named.

Neu, 26, has relocated to northern Michigan and begun working for Computer Haus, a Traverse City-based computer firm owned by his father, Dick Neu.

Neu had taught in the business education department at Canton until the end of the 1987-88 school year when he was laid-off when staff cut-backs were implemented.

"The semester off gave me time to reflect and evaluate what would be best for Rob Neu five, 10, 20 years down the road," he said. "It's a tremendous opportunity for me to work with my dad and in the computer industry. I'd like to make myself as marketable as possible."

NEU, WHO WILL be stationed in Petoskey, will work in the sales and support end of the company's operation. As education director, he will service schools in northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula that buy computers from his company, instructing teachers and administrators in use of

the equipment.

"My dad has been after me for quite some time," said Neu, adding he was not leaving with any animosity toward the school district.

"One thing I was fearful of was my education was becoming stagnant, and this opportunity is providing me with that growth. I haven't left education, I'm just in another facet."

Neu, who graduated from Plymouth-Salis in 1989 and Eastern Michigan University in 1986, said the decision to leave coaching was difficult because of the bonds that had been established with players and staff members.

Neu coached the Canton girls to a four-year record of 67-18, winning the Western Division championship in the Western Lakes Activities Association every year.

His last basketball, which finished 19-2 and was ranked No. 5 in Class A, captured the school's first WLAIA title. The Chiefs lost to Salem in the district tournament, however.

"I really felt this was the most difficult time to leave the girls basketball program," he said, "especially from an emotional standpoint because the relationships developed in our program were very strong."

"I FEEL WE had just reached a level where we were competitive at the state level. We ended with the shocking loss to Salem, but that made the program that much hungrier and experienced

going into 1989. It will be difficult not being a part of that."

Neu attended the team banquet Thursday night but waited until the next day to tell his players about his decision during a team meeting.

"The banquet needed to be for the girls," he said.

Neu, who also expressed his gratitude to assistants Dick Blahm, Leigh Langkabel and Mike Gray, said he definitely wants to return to coaching, but it will have to be at an outside high school because of his new job.

Blahm, a Plymouth-Canton assistant athletic director, said Monday the job will be posted and nobody has applied yet.

Blahm, who was the Canton JV coach the past four years and, before that, the successful head coach of the Salem girls team, would appear to be the obvious choice to replace Neu if he desired the position.

"That's something I would have to give a lot of deep thought to," he said. "I haven't had time to even think about it."

"I HADN'T thought about not having (Neu) here to coach. I have a big job in the athletic department and will have to re-evaluate the whole situation."

"It's not that I wouldn't be interested. The key word is always time. Can you fit everything in and meet all of your responsibilities?"

Top matmen compete

The 30th annual Michigan Wrestling Club Invitational will be held Sunday, Feb. 5 at Westland John Glenn High School.

The freestyle tourney, which is expected to attract several former Olympians, begins at 10 a.m. with the opening ceremonies. The tournament is open to amateur wrestlers 17 years and older, and it is part of the USA Wrestling Championship Series.

John Wood, one of the tournament directors, said as many as 20 club teams from the U.S. and Canada will send wrestlers. He already has received commitments from Doug Cox and Gary Holmer, both of whom wrestled on the 1988 Canadian Olympic team.

Wood also hopes to get a commitment from Randy Lewis, a 1984 gold medalist for the U.S. Olympic team, who has competed two of the last three years at the Michigan tourney. The U.S. Marine Corps team heads the list of clubs expected to show.

"THIS IS not a backyard tournament," Wood said. "It's got some high-caliber people that have entered and that's why we get teams from Canada — because they knew the competition is so good. It's not like a golf tournament, where we get guys who haven't wrestled for 10 years."

"We just finished an Olympic year, so I thought our turnout would be down. But that's not the indication I'm getting from the amount of phone calls I've gotten."

International freestyle rules will be applied with the latest FILA interpretations. Registration costs \$10 and weigh-in will be from 8 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. Weight classes begin at 105.5, followed in order by 114.5, 125.5, 136.5, 149.5, 163, 180.5, 198, 220 and heavyweight.

Tickets to attend the tournament cost \$2 for adults and \$1 for students high school age and below.

Raiders pin city rivals

North Farmington finished at 2-3 in the Lakes Division by virtue of its 46-24 wrestling victory over Farmington on Thursday night.

The Raiders, overall, overcame an early deficit by claiming victory in eight of the last nine weight classes, including voids in the last three.

Back-to-back pins by Lucian Van Cleave (130) and Adam Forman (135) started the comeback. Van Cleave pinned Dave Tretnik in 3:11, and Forman stopped Rob Cavagnoli in 3:43.

Matt Thompson's 9-2 decision over Todd Jacobs at 140 put North in front, 19-18. V.J. Matul (145) pinned Chris Kresle in 1:51, and Gary Evangelista (152) decisioned Steve Walter 8-7 to complete a string of five straight wins, giving the Raiders a 28-18 lead.

Farmington's Peter Fraumenheim (160) pinned Rob Jamrog in 50 seconds at 160 pounds before Jeff Jacobs (171), Jeff Alkman (180) and heavyweight Zalm Cunnula made it a blowout with forfeit victories.

In the early going, Farmington's Matt Smith (103) pinned Jeremy Moy in 3:42. Chris Phillips (119) pinned Scott Burkholder in 2:17 and Brian Link (125) pinned Brian Walby in 3:43, giving the Falcons an 18-4 lead.

At 112 pounds, North's Jeff Head won an 11-2 decision over Steve Lemieux.

Blazers beat Marlins

Continued from Page 1

drea Velthoven had six. Sister Nikki Burns recorded 16 assists, but the Marlins had trouble converting her passes, DeBeliso said.

"I THOUGHT we passed the ball well, but we had a stretch there the second game where we gave them too many free balls," DeBeliso said. "I'm proud of her. She did a nifty. Our two outside hitters, Jennifer and Andrea, played well to night but we need them to play better and they know that."

"We're still missing the ingredient to get the ball down. We lack the killer instinct and all that is attitude," DeBeliso praised the play of Poe, who until Thursday saw limited action on the varsity.

"That's probably the most blocks we've had by anyone all year," he said. "I'm proud of her. She did a nifty. Our two outside hitters, Jennifer and Andrea, played well to night but we need them to play better and they know that."

North drops Vikings

North Farmington continued to dominate Western Lakes Activities Association volleyball teams Thursday, scoring a three-game victory over visiting Walled Lake Central.

North, 3-0 in Lakes Division play and 5-0 in the WLAIA, lost the first game 11-15 but scored 15-9 and 15-10 wins in Games 2 and 3.

The Raiders are 10-2 overall.

North coach Sandy Labinski expects to meet Central during the WLAIA tournament on Saturday, Feb. 25.

Kelly Coulson was North's top server, scoring 22 points and recording six aces. She had only one service error in 28 tries.

Wendy Wolfe led North with four service aces, and she had only one bad serve in 10 attempts.

Denise O'Brien finished with eight kills for North, and teammate Eve Clear had seven kills. Coulson and Courtney Knapp had six kills each for North, which plays today at Westland John Glenn.

Coulson and Knapp also excelled on defense with six digs each.

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