

Kavanaugh fills dual role as Schoolcraft coach, AD

BY C.J. RISAK

STAFF WRITER

Two questions confronted Ed Kavanaugh last December when Livonia Ladywood athletic director Sal Malek announced the school would not renew Kavanaugh's contract to coach girls basketball.



Kavanaugh

First: Would he miss it? Second: Could he find the right something to replace it?

The answer to both is yes. The highly successful high school coach did not have to conduct much of a search for another coaching position. He was chosen last Thursday to fill a pair of openings at Schoolcraft College, where Kavanaugh is employed as a mathematics teacher.

He replaces Marty Nowak as athletic director and Jack Grenan as women's basketball coach.

"We had three excellent candidates," said Midge Carleton, assistant dean in charge of physical sciences, in naming Kavanaugh. "It was a very difficult choice to make. But I'm very happy with the selection. I do feel we'll work well together."

Carleton said the two positions were considered separately by her seven-person selection committee, which went no further than posting the job openings within the university. Others considered for the AD position were men's basketball coach Dave Bogatz and Cecil Woodruff.

Both Nowak and Grenan resigned after the last basketball season to pursue other interests.

Ironically, it was Grenan who replaced Kavanaugh at SC nine years ago after serving as his assistant coach. Kavanaugh coached at Ladywood twice, from 1976 to '87 and from '91 to '93. He compiled a 259-61 record, never

having suffered a losing season. He guided the 92 Blazers to the Class A quarterfinals. Last season, the team finished 14-4.

In his first stint at Ladywood, the Blazers won two state titles. In his three-year absence, they were at best a 500 team, going 17-22 the two seasons prior to his return.

This will also be his second tenure as SC's athletic director. He served in that capacity for two years, leaving in '91 due to time constraints.

Asked what prompted him to return to coaching so quickly after his abrupt dismissal at Ladywood, Kavanaugh said, "It's like falling off a horse."

At Ladywood, he had problems with the administration, which insisted on restricting his use of the new gymnasium. At SC, he'll be both coach and administrator — his own boss, to an extent.

Kavanaugh said he had been approached by Grenan near the end of last season, when Grenan was considering resigning. "But I didn't even really think about it until the opportunity was posted," Kavanaugh said.

He said he asked himself if this was the opportunity he was looking for. It was. "The most fun for me in coaching," Kavanaugh said, "has been taking a program that's nothing and making it something."

The Lady Ocelots were always among the Eastern Conference leaders during Kavanaugh's first coaching stint, and they remained there during Grenan's first few seasons. But they have struggled the last few years; their 13-13 overall record last season was their best in three seasons.

Although Kavanaugh is getting a late start, at least in recruiting, he will hardly be building from the ground up. As many as eight players could return from last season's team.

"Without a doubt, there's some quality athletes in this area," said Kavanaugh. His formula won't change: "We'll run a variety of defenses, we'll press a lot, we'll run as much as possible."

He admitted he hasn't much of an idea what kind of talent he has to work with, but he knows there are players on campus who didn't try out for the team last season. "I have to get on the horn and talk to some of these kids," he said. "Get them out on the court and see what we have."

Kavanaugh also plans to meet with both the coaching staff and Carleton. With Carleton, he wants to "set down a list of goals, things to improve, things that should be in place."

"I have been assured it is not a secretarial job," he said of the AD's position. "There is a power involved, all the budgeting responsibilities, the hiring and firing of coaches, the scheduling."

Neither task will be easy, but as Kavanaugh said in reflecting back on his first coaching stint at SC: "When I took it over before it was nothing."

He quickly transformed the program into something, a process he also used twice at Ladywood. He'll try it a fourth time this fall, this time at SC.

Farmington athletes place in 3 events at state finals

BY DAN O'MEARA

STAFF WRITER

Kevin Bryant set a Farmington Harrison school record in the 110-meter hurdles Saturday at the Class A track meet.

Unfortunately for him, Bryant was clocked at 14 seconds in the prelims and not the final.

Bryant placed eighth in the championship heat at Midland High School with a 15.0 time.

"I thought he was ready, but I didn't know he was that ready," Harrison coach John Reed said. Bryant eclipsed the record of 14.3 set a year ago by his brother, Don Bryant, who won the state championship.

"Kevin wanted to beat his brother at state as far as final, but he's a junior and only been hurdling for a month and a half," Reed said. "He's going to get a lot better and be a great hurdler next year."

In the semifinals, Bryant nicked the second and third hurdles, lost his rhythm and finished fifth.

Ordinarily, only the top four from each heat advance to the final. But the Midland track has nine lanes, so the best fifth-place time also qualified. That allowed Bryant to make the final.

TRACK

level. "She went up there with the attitude she had as good an opportunity to score as any of the other girls."

Like the Harrison relay, North Farmington senior Chris Bouschet just missed getting eighth place and points in the boys long jump.

Bouschet's best jump Saturday was 21-4, but he was a quarter inch shy and had to settle for ninth.

He was eighth until Tarek Jammal of Grand Rapids Christian went 21-1/4 on his final attempt.

"On his last jump, Chris was working a little more height, and he hyper-extended his knee on the second to last step," North coach Todd Schultz said.

"He didn't have a chance to peel off the runway before hitting the board. That just killed all his speed, which resulted in a jump he wanted to have back."

"He broke an ankle and didn't have a tremendous junior season, but he came back and really competed well," Schultz added. "I hate to see him go because he's such a good kid and not just a great competitor."

"She was able to handle the pressure of being at the state meet, and she was pretty consistent with most of her throws."

Gordon qualified last year but didn't score, and she learned from that experience, according to Pinnell.

"She was very impressed last year by a lot of good throwers," he said. "That kinda lit a fire under her, and she knew what she had to do to compete at that

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eager to begin his new role as teacher.

"That will become the focal point once the fall rolls around," he said. "I think I'm going to have a new-found respect for people who teach all day and coach all night."

"I don't think I realized (Harrison) coach (Mike) Teachman, after a game, had to work on lesson plans, get up early the next day and teach five hours of math. It's an early morning and late-night job."

George, who graduated from Harrison in 1986, spent a year working in public relations after college and was an assistant JV basketball coach at Harrison in '90-91.

He returned to Albion in the role of assistant admissions director and worked toward becoming certified to teach.

George is 12th in career scoring at Albion with more than 1,000 points and holds the school record for three-point field goal percentage in a season.

He also follows in the footsteps of his father, Jim, who coached girls basketball and baseball at Livonia Stevenson.

"I expect I'll see him two or three rows behind the bench a few times this season," George said. "He's my biggest fan. He used to come and watch me play; now he can come and watch me coach."

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