

Holland from page D1

JoAnn Holland has an antique business, so her husband might find himself stripping and staining furniture some days, too.

Holland, who was North Farmington's varsity football coach for 21 years, won't be absent from the scene. He plans to continue doing the play-by-play for football telecasts on cable TV.

After graduating from Ionia High School where he played football, basketball and baseball and then Western Michigan University in 1958, Holland's first job was at Nashville, southwest of Lansing, before coming to Farmington when North opened in 1961.

The Raiders had only a JV football program that first year. When coach Warren McKenzie went into administrative work the next year, Holland became North's first varsity coach, a position he held through the 1982 season. He also coached boys track while teaching physical education.

"Football is a big part of my life," Holland says. "That's why I went to college. My goal was to be a football coach, and I prepared myself to that end. I had fun all the time I was doing it."

"Coaching football and track was just a joy for me. I enjoyed preparing and interacting with the coaches who worked with me. I missed the daily relationship with the kids, and game days were a lot of fun."

Holland's 1970 North football team finished the season as the No. 1 Class A team in the state. That was five years before the playoffs started. The 1978 team was the state runner-up to Traverse City.

"You kinda get caught up in that (records), but after a while

you realize you're not here for that," Holland said, adding the day-to-day relationship with players is what means the most.

"You hope they had a great experience playing high school sports and you did everything possible to make it enjoyable."

The soft-spoken Holland is the opposite of the stereotypical gruff and rough-talking football coach but was just as effective using a stern but easy-going demeanor.

"I probably yelled once in a while, maybe early in my career," he said, adding he got good advice from his WMU football coach, Buck Reed. "He said you should always talk normal to kids and not yell, because you want them to be edging forward to hear you. If you're yelling, they're not going to be listening anymore."

"I never approved of swearing. I didn't want to do anything to hurt a player's ego or self-esteem. Instead, they might say 'Here comes that look. Coach Holland is going to give you one of his nasty stares and you'd better do a better job.'"

When Jack Cotton retired in 1983, Holland joined the administration and became just the second athletic director Farmington Public Schools has had. "Jack's got so many things in place," Holland said of Cotton, who oversaw the start of girls sports and the expansion from one to three high schools. "All I tried to do is refine it, develop it and continue the tradition Farmington had athletically as a district."

Besides doing the scheduling for all sports for Farmington's three high schools and four middle schools and overseeing 182 coaches, he also heads the health

and physical education department.

"It was a real adjustment coming from one high school where I was the football and track coach," Holland said. Many people think all an AD has to do is answer the phone, shuffle paper, go to meetings and drink coffee all day.

"Luckily, I'm a structured and organized guy. That helped when I came into this job. Fifteen years is enough, and it's time to do something else."

Barb Prince has served as athletic secretary in Holland's office for the last 13 years and deserves a large share of the credit for making a big operation function well, according to Holland.

"There are so many things she can handle on a daily basis that makes this office so efficient," he said, adding Farmington has had just two athletic secretaries, too. Beverly Johnson preceded Prince in that job.

Nearly 3,000 students in Farmington competed in high school and middle school athletics and another 1,500-plus in intramurals last year.

The district will install lights at its three football fields, start a hockey program next school year and build auxiliary gyms at North Farmington and Farmington high schools.

A feasibility study is being done on the outdoor facilities at Harrison to improve its softball complex, find space for a soccer field and improve the football practice sites.

"I think in 15 years we've done a lot, and we've got a lot going," Holland said. "I think we're doing a lot of positive things for a lot of kids."

Patriots earn first baseball victories of '98

Spring break has been good to the Livonia Franklin baseball team.

The Patriots (2-4) swept a double-header Wednesday from visiting University of Detroit-Jaunt (2-6) to earn their first two victories of the year, 7-6 and 9-6.

"It's the best defense we've played all year," Franklin assistant coach Don Harris said. "If we do that, we'll be in a lot of ballgames."

David Word pitched six strong innings to pick up the win in the

first game. He struck out 10, walked seven and scattered six hits. Bryan Waldo came on to earn the save in the seventh.

The Patriots trailed 4-2 after five innings before exploding for five runs in the bottom of the sixth.

Waldo's three-run double keyed the surge. He went 2-for-4 with a pair of doubles and four RBI. Teammate Mike Franklin went 3-for-4.

In the nightcap, Mike Cochran went 2-for-3 with three RBI and

Tom Jones sparked a four-run second inning with a two-run single.

Jamie Proffer, the winning pitcher, scattered nine walks and six hits over six innings. He struck out six before giving way to Waldo, who pitched two scoreless innings and fanned three to earn his second save of the day.


Franklin, a junior shortstop, went 2-for-5.

The Patriots scored three times in the fourth inning to break a six-all deadlock.

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