

Barrett resigns Stevenson post

Livonia Stevenson's Walt Barrett, one of the nation's winningest high school boys soccer coaches, is headed to the collegiate ranks.

Barrett, who compiled an impressive 125-15-23 record in eight seasons with the Spartans, will join Eastern Michigan University's staff as an assistant coach under Brian Tinnion.

The move, rumored to be in the works for several months, was finalized early last week.

Barrett coached Stevenson to two state championships (1991 and '96) and one runner-up finish (1993).

"It was slow torture for three months," Barrett said. "I couldn't take it because it was the toughest decision I've ever made in my life."

"I enjoyed Stevenson and being part of the program. That's why it was so hard. It was a huge decision which took until the last moment."

"But this was a wonderful opportunity I couldn't pass up," Barrett hopes to bolster EMU's recruiting efforts. The Eagles finished 4-13-4 in Tinnion's fourth season.

"I'm excited to have him on board," Tinnion said of 37-year-

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old Barrett. "He will definitely help recruiting. He's been an Olympic Development Program coach at the regional level, and obviously, he's been a successful high school coach."

Barrett, a former player at Schoolcraft College and club player at Wayne State University, will pay strict attention to defense.

"I was disappointed last year because we gave too many goals away," Tinnion said. "I've watched (Barrett) play and, although he was not the most gifted of talents, he was smart and had the physical attributes which compensated against more talented players."

In 1997, Barrett took the Birmingham Blazers, an under-16 boys team, to the U.S. Youth Soccer Association championship game. His ODP under-17 regional teams have won national titles three of the past four years.

"I thought my soccer appetite had been satisfied," Barrett said. "Maybe I got too comfortable and I needed to be challenged. I had pretty much achieved all my

goals in club and in high school.

"I was looking for something else. But I realize this (EMU) is going to be an uphill battle."

Barrett, who led unheralded Southfield High to an upset of Stevenson in the 1987 regional final, spent two seasons as a JV and assistant coach under the legendary Pete Scerri.

Scerri, who won four state titles and had two runner-up finishes, won his last state title in 1988, Barrett's first-year as an assistant.

"I will always be grateful for Walt, who was a successful coach at Southfield, for coming over and being JV coach until Pete Scerri left," Stevenson athletic director Roger Frayer said. "Not a lot of coaches would be willing to take a step back before taking a step forward."

"He took us to the same heights that Pete Scerri took us and, hopefully, Lars can continue at the same level."

The EMU assistant's position is not full-time. Barrett will continue to work for Telephone Support Systems of Farmington Hills.

Barrett told the Stevenson players last spring that the EMU position had been offered.

Cyclones capture division title



Soccer champs: The Cicero Cyclones won the Farmington Soccer Club's under-9 boys division for the spring season. Under the guidance of coach Jim Cicero, the Cyclones were undefeated in eight games with seven victories and one tie. Each player received a trophy. Members of the Cyclones team are (front row, from left), Matt Rose, Joe Buzzek, Alexander French, Scott Dixon, Brad Balsis, Ashay Yande, (back row, from left) Randy Krahn, Ryan Pylar, Mike Cicero, Ameya Walemba, Ben Beale and Justin Work.

Former Spartan star named coach

Livonia Stevenson High will fill its boys varsity soccer coaching position from within.

Lars Richters, one of the school's all-time greats, ran his first practice Monday as head coach of the Spartans.

He replaces Walt Barrett, who resigned last week to take an assistant coaching position at Eastern Michigan University.

"I wasn't sure until the last minute that Wally would be leaving, but this is certainly a dream come true," said Richters, who led Stevenson to state championships in 1985 and '86 and played at Yale University. "I've been in coaching awhile, but some day I thought it would be really great to coach back at Stevenson. It's really exciting."

Richters spent the past seven years playing professional indoor soccer for the Detroit Rockers

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where the defender was among the NFL's leaders in blocks.

Richters, 29, has also coached for the Livonia YMCA Premier Soccer Club's Hawks and Wolves programs, and worked the Rockers summer camps.

Richters takes over for Barrett, who won a pair of state championships with a career record of 125-15-23 in eight seasons. He also played under Pete Scerri, who won four state titles and finished runner-up twice.

"Stevenson has a great tradition and my job is to build on that tradition," Richters said. "Both Wally and Pete had good ideas on how to be successful at the high school level. They've been doing a lot of things right for a lot of years."

"I have some ideas to add to what they've done. And I know it's not going to be easy," Richters, who will do his student teaching this year, will likely retire from the professional ranks.

"My plan is to wrap up my requirements for a teaching degree and right now I won't plan playing," he said. "Last year I went to school full-time, and when you throw in the coaching responsibility, that's going to have to do me in as a player."

Richters takes over a team that finished 10-3-4 a year ago.

"This year's team is a good group with some good senior leaders and some juniors who will be impact players," he said. "I think it's a good mix and I look forward to working with them."

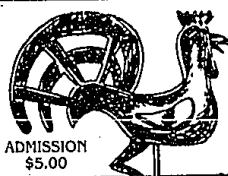
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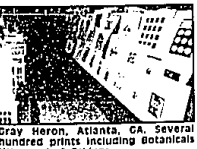
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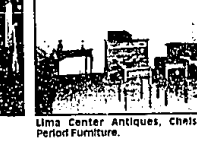
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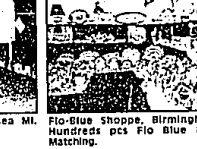
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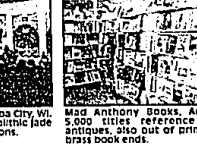
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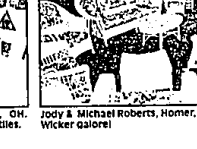
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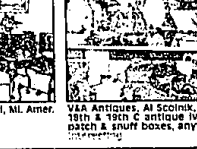
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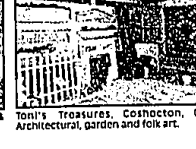
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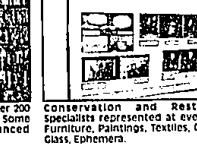
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