

U-D rehires ex-Canton cage coach

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

It's a good thing nobody staged a welcome-home party for John Mulroy. He wouldn't have been able to attend.

Mulroy is indeed coming home — back to the University of Detroit basketball program and back to the high school gymnasium he frequented two years ago.

Don Sisko has rehired Mulroy as a full-time assistant coach. Mulroy, a Redford Catholic Central product, was a part-time assistant at U-D in 1983 and 1984.

Mulroy spent the 1984-85 school year in the Plymouth-Canton Community School District coaching the Plymouth Salem boys and Plymouth

Canton girls basketball teams. He left to take a part-time assistant coaching position at Central Michigan University.

Now he's coming home. But before he could replant his local roots, Sisko sent him out on a recruiting mission.

"I haven't even unpacked my bags," said Mulroy Monday from his U-D office. He's working at the Don Sisko basketball camp. "Don told me during our interview to be prepared to hit the dusty trail whenever need be. First thing he did was send me out to scout the Five-Star Camp in Pittsburgh. After that, I went to Minnesota to see an all-star game there."

DON'T FOR A minute get the impression that Mulroy is complaining. He's doing something he truly loves. This is his first full-time coaching

job at the college level. His former role at U-D was a bit removed from the basketball court. "I was kind of like a glorified secretary," he said. He arranged the team's travel plans and was active in the player's academic lives.

His current role involves expanding responsibilities in recruiting, scouting and coaching.

"This is just a great opportunity for me," he said. "I get to come home, back to an urban area that I know well and am very fond of. I'll be able to watch high school games again. Outside of my one year in Plymouth, I've only seen about eight or 10 high school games; only the ones played at Calihan Hall. So, I'm looking forward to seeing high school games again. I'll get to see the kids I coached at Salem."

The other stuff I did (travel plans) were necessary evils, but

what I'm doing now are the things that made me want to get involved with coaching in the first place. I'll be working with kids I'll be evaluating them and helping make decisions on which ones can help us win basketball games."

MULROY is one of two new assistant coaches hired by Sisko. Successful Highland Park Community College coach Glen Donahue is the other. Sisko seems very pleased with his new staff.

"From John's point of view, coming back to U-D is a more rewarding opportunity," the U-D head coach said. "From our point of view, he knows our system and our school and he had done a tremendous job for us before he left. Now he's even more valuable because he has gained more experience. We're very happy to have him back."

The atmosphere surrounding the U-D basketball program is a bit more cloudy than Mulroy may remember it from two years ago. The past two seasons have begun with high hopes and ended in frustration. The Titans have posted 16-13 and 13-15 records, respectively, and narrowly missed earning post-season tournament berths each year.

"Whatever pressure there may be, I think, is self-applied," he said. "I am planning on making a substantial contribution to this program. I want to bring in top players who are going to help us win games."

"Since coach (Sisko) has been here, every season has been separated by like three or four games. I mean, if we could have turned around three or four games, we would have been where we wanted to be. Last year, we needed one more win in the regular season and a couple in the tour-

namment and we would have had an NCAA bid. Two years ago, all we had to do was win one game in the tournament and we would have had an NIT bid. We're not talking about being miles away. I really think we're going to have a lot of fun here this season."

THE TOUGHEST thing about rejoining U-D for Mulroy was rearranging his family structure. His wife, former Plymouth Canton girls basketball coach Phyllis Cunningham Mulroy, has a job obligation at Central Michigan and will remain in Mount Pleasant for at least three months.

"That's real difficult," John Mulroy said. "We'll be having a commuter marriage for a while. But I really couldn't pass up this opportunity. It's big-time for me."

Welcome back.

New league for OLSM?

By C.J. Riesek
staff writer

There's an identity crisis at St. Mary's College.

Located on the banks of Orchard Lake, the small (enrollment under 400) school is often overlooked. And when it's referred to as Orchard Lake St. Mary's, it's often confused with the Class C prep school located on the same grounds.

Which rankles Tim Domke, the college's athletic director, co-basketball coach and dean of students. "We're St. Mary's College, not Orchard Lake St. Mary's," he insists.

DOMKE is hoping to reverse the situation. And a big step in realizing that aim could come next year, when St. Mary's joins five other small Michigan colleges in forming a new league.

The tentative name for the new circuit will be the Southern Michigan Athletic Conference (SMAC). Other prospective members are Siena Heights, Spring Arbor, Aquinas, Concordia and Grand Rapids Baptist. The league would formally begin competition in the fall of 1987.

St. Mary's currently offers just men's basketball as a collegiate sport. If the new conference reaches reality, the school would expand to offer "a minimum of four sports in the first two years and a minimum of six after that — two of which would be women's," Domke said.

ST. MARY'S enrollment is roughly evenly divided between men and women. Additional sports under consideration, according to Domke, are baseball, tennis, cross country, soccer and women's basketball. Tennis, cross country and possibly soccer could be offered for both sexes.

"This will put us on a par instantly with the GLIAC," said Domke, referring to the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, a collection of NCAA Division II schools that includes Oakland University. "We've got a player of the week, we've got standings in all the papers."

"The kids we recruit will have something to shoot for."

Athletic directors from all six schools gathered in June to hammer out details. According to Domke, all that remains to bring SMAC to life is approval from each school's administration and trustees.

SMAC members will continue to compete in the NAIA, Domke said.

THE ST. MARY'S AD added that a league affiliation will put St. Mary's in the public's eye. "There are people in the (prep) Catholic League who don't even know we have women in college here," he said.

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