

North grad takes charge of Stevenson team

BY BRAD EDMONS
STAFF WRITER

HOCKEY

Livonia Stevenson's hockey program is promoting from within, as five-year assistant Mike Harris was elevated to the school's head coaching position last week.

Harris, 39, succeeds Matt Mulcahy, who stepped down in March after posting a record of 29-17-1 during the past two seasons in his second stint as Spartans' coach. "Mike has been an assistant to both Paul Ferguson and Matt

(Mulcahy) and we believe he'll carry on the winning tradition and carry on the discipline that was started in our program under Jerry Kestner," Stevenson athletic director Roger Frayer said. "Mike is young and enthusiastic and he wants to get as many kids in our school who are available from the open leagues to play in our program." Harris will be ably assisted by

Livonian Ron Griffin, a former U.S. National Team member and All-America defenseman at the University of Wisconsin.

"I'm the head coach, but I look at a guy like Ron Griffin as a coach, a scholar of the game who I'll look to for advice," Harris said. "Ron has a lot more experience than I do. I really respect him and we'll work together."

Harris, however, has an extensive hockey background, too. He was a member of coach Rick Comley's first varsity team at

Northern Michigan University (1976-77) and was a teammate of NHL players Tom Laidlaw and Steve Weese, as well as Don Waddell, a Redford Bishop Borgess grad who is now general manager of the IHL San Diego Gulls.

"I'm really not going to change anything at Stevenson because I believe the program is on sound, solid ground," Harris said. "I was fortunate I played for a lot of good coaches, including Rick Comley. I also learned a lot from Paul (Ferguson) and Matt (Mulcahy). I have to give them a big thanks for helping me get the job."

"I won't let Dr. (Dale) Collier (Stevenson's principal) or Roger Frayer down."

Harris grew up on Detroit's west side. As a junior high student, he tagged along watching coach Jack Cumbleton's teams at Detroit Benedictine.

After his family moved to the suburbs, Harris spent his freshman year at Birmingham Brother Rice, but he left after the program was momentarily dropped. Harris ended up graduating from North Farmington High

School, while playing for the Farmington Flyers. He then left for Marquette to play for Iron Rangers of the U.S. Hockey League before going on to NMU.

Harris played one season with the Wildcats before signing up with the U.S. Marines where he ultimately attained the rank of captain. Harris spent almost eight years as a helicopter pilot, logging 1,200 hours in search and rescue missions from Okinawa to Japan in the Pacific Ocean.

Following his stint with the Marines, Harris returned home to civilian life in 1985.

Now residing in Livonia with his wife, Julie, and two sons, Nick, 10, and Matt, 8, Harris is employed as an account representative for LDI, a computer sales and leasing company.

"When I got back home I made out a list of things that I liked and one was hockey," Harris said. "I think high school hockey can help down the road. I'd like to help kids get scholarships and push them towards college. But there's more to life than hockey. There's got to be a balance."

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