

Gedeon's potential was clear early on

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BOYS BASKETBALL

Former Ross coach broke into profession at 18-years-old

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Prior to his senior year as a student at Bowling Green High School, Mark Gedeon told incoming coach Keith Diebler he wanted to impress him enough to force him to make him a member of his staff when Gedeon was a freshman in college.

Diebler returned to Gibsonburg after one year at Bowling Green. His assistant, Tom Rex, took over the next season and Gedeon was his seventh-grade coach.

"When I met him as a freshman in high school, I recognized a mature, respectful young man," Rex said. "I coached him (at Bowling Green). He had an incredible work ethic.

"He's somebody who gave their best every day. It never changed over the years."

Gedeon, who resigned Friday as Fremont Ross boys varsity basketball coach, knew Rex would be taking a chance on an 18-year-old freshman at Bowling Green State University as a first-time head coach. Rex, who was 27 at the time, didn't see it that way.

"Mark was probably one of the easiest and best hires I made as a head coach," Rex said. "I had no doubt. His character and integrity. His age was irrelevant and administration felt the same way.

"He was the kind of kid you wanted on your team as a coach and the kind of man you'd want to coach your child. You'd feel comfortable, even grateful, if your son would play for him."

Rex respects Gedeon's thoroughness and attention to detail.

"He earned respect from players and came every day as prepared as he could be to give the game everything he had," he said. "His work ethic is evident in how he approaches whatever he's doing.

"His character is so strong and his work ethic is so impressive, he was always prepared to do his best. I'm incredibly proud of him and to be associated with him."



Mark Gedeon resigned Friday as varsity boys basketball coach at Fremont Ross. FILE

Rex attended one of Gedeon's games the past several seasons and ironically was there for the Little Giants' last contest this year.

"He's given his all in a very tough coaching environment for decades," Rex said of factors including the Little Giants' schedule. "That takes a toll. It was probably one of the hardest decisions in his life.

"If he didn't feel he could absolutely give 100 percent without harming himself — he won't pace himself. He has to do it as well as he can and with the emotional and physical wear, it must have been the right time."

Gedeon was seventh-grade coach at Bowling Green for three years and freshman coach for one.

"If you knew Mark, you knew he could handle that and more," Rex said.

Gedeon started as junior varsity coach at Fremont Ross in 1990 and took the helm at the varsity level five years later.

"It was my goal since my junior year in high school," Gedeon said. "I wanted to coach a Division I program and teach high school math."

Another objective was to marry his childhood sweetheart and have a family with four children. They did that.

"The love and support Mark received from Mindy throughout his career, and life, is the foundation from which this whole story began and continues to this day," Rex said. "She is a true treasure herself."

Gedeon will have time to be more of a full-time dad. His son, Ben, played varsity as a sophomore, so Gedeon will surely still be close as a fan.

"I've been fortunate," Gedeon said. "I've done it and I'm still doing it. This is totally my choice. It was just a decision I had to make. I love Fremont Ross.

"I love our program and working with our kids. I've been blessed to have the longevity I did with the relationships with coaches and players. I'll treasure those."

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