

McQuaid Re-Enters Coaching Ranks

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Those laconic, mournful loyalists of East Carteret basketball have begun to wipe away the tears and envision teams with the majesty and might that Tom McQuaid once produced at storied Beaufort High.

The redoubtable old master labored as athletic director a year ago, but like so many who say "I quit," found it difficult to sever connections from this game his life has revolved inexorably for so long.

So now he is back as a head coach in a familiar area, intent on constructing a tattered team into a tyrant, but promising no miracles.

Having astutely directed the now defunct Beaufort High to eight State Tournaments and four championships before departing in '66, McQuaid was naturally depicted as a man of magic, a demi-god.

But he is too earnest, too honest, too self-effacing to accept the tag of "miracle worker." The two prerequisites for success, he theorized, are good material and a willingness to work. It isn't achieved by the wave of a wand.

Although East Carteret has

suffered four losing seasons in as many years and is still in the embryonic stage, McQuaid insists that he doesn't feel like a man walking down the path of disaster.

"I believe we will do all right," he said. "I think we have fairly good material and I believe these kids will work. I expect us to be able to hold our own . . . at least I hope we will."

McQuaid talked about this challenge with ardor, like a man who had a new-found fascination for the game.

No, his philosophy hasn't changed. Yes, he will preach defense, defense, defense. If his players are not willing to guard with watchdog tenacity then they are likely to be watching — from the bench.

"I never have liked for a team to take a shot and then drop back," offered the man who once coached Beaufort to three State titles in a row and 91 consecutive victories.

"You've got to put pressure on the ball. Everything else can go wrong — your shooting, your rebounding, etc. — but your defense had better not go wrong. You've got to condition your players so they can play four full quarters, full court. . ."

A sedulous worker, McQuaid is cognizant that the times

have wrought changes, that consolidation has added dimension to the task.

East Carteret competes in the Northeastern 3-A Conference, and the scope of the school encases a larger area of the county than old Beaufort did, thereby inducing some travel trouble for a segment of the players.

But McQuaid does not label that as a major handicap, and contends that his predecessor, Otis Johnson, began pointing the Mariners in the right direction, although they went 5-14 against conference foes last winter.

"He had discipline and he kept things well organized," said McQuaid.

That's the McQuaid style and pattern — organization and discipline. He's not the type of coach a player would embrace, just like Vince Lombardi and Adolph Rupp are not. But he is liked and respected immensely.

"Technically, he's one of the very best," complimented Pud Hassell, one of Beaufort's best during the golden era of 91 straight wins.

"You had 100 per cent confidence in him during the games. He's a great game coach. He kept his cool, and he always had that vision to spot a flaw and make corrections on the spot.

"He was a strict disciplinarian, but he never demanded anything he didn't believe in."

Always a step, or maybe two steps, ahead, McQuaid is eyeing the junior high programs with fervor and will leave the jayvee program under the close surveillance of able Chuck Lewis, another notable from yesteryear.

"We are going to have clinics on Saturday mornings," guaranteed McQuaid. "Coach Jones did that last year."

Really, it was difficult to picture this man in repose, away from the sport. Oh, it was placid, tranquil, pressure-free, all right, and McQuaid said that he enjoyed last year.

But it was not as rewarding as those of the past, and he hopes, those of the future.