

Back on bench: Long-time coach missed interaction with students

BY JADE GRASIANI

After watching from the stands for the past three years, boys' basketball head coach PJ Quinn is ready to be back on the sidelines.

Quinn was head coach for 24 years and assistant for three prior to that, having won the state championship in 2009 and qualifying for state six other times.

Trying to balance coaching and a new position was too much on his plate.

"Part of the reason I quit is because I did not feel like the responsibilities I had just started taking on as the superintendent were allowing me to do both jobs well," Quinn said. "I think part of it was just not being terribly familiar with my job as the superintendent."

After three years of relaxation and becoming comfortable in his superintendent role, he reached the conclusion it was time to come back. Not only did he need to come back for the team, but for himself too.

"The number one thing that I don't like about it (not coaching) is it has separated me from the students more than I've ever

been separated from the students," Quinn said. "When I was a principal for 13 years, you still work with kids on a daily basis."

In addition to Quinn's excitement, the players are thrilled to see his return as well. Junior Wyatt Engel played for Coach Quinn in middle school and knows his coaching will add great proficiency for the team.

"What I really liked about Coach Quinn is how he pushed us to be better," Engel said. "I feel like some coaches kind of take it easy on us, and he never did that, which made us better as a team."

Another reason as to why Quinn felt the need to return was because of trouble finding a different coach. Mead has been through three different coaches in the past four years, and Quinn didn't enjoy seeing the struggle.

"Just the need," Quinn said, "because we're having a tougher and tougher time getting people that want to coach."

Although fall sports are still being played, the preparation for basketball sea-

son starts now. Quinn plans on picking up similar to where he left off.

"I don't think you'll see a lot of changes in my overall approach to coaching," said Quinn, who compiled a 313-213 record in his previous stint as coach. "I'm going to try to do something a little bit different than I've done in the past because we used to be very rules based."

Quinn keeping his same coaching philosophy is something Engel looks forward to. Engel said coaches in the past "haven't had the level of intensity that Coach Quinn brings.

"I just remember that season being one of the most enjoyable seasons I've had playing basketball," Engel said. "We're just so tight as a team and having the greatness of a coach like Mr. Quinn will always help out your team."

Quinn is prepared to be back on the sidelines leading the team to be the best it can.

"I think what I'm looking forward to most is just being back around players," Quinn said, "because that's what I missed the most."

Jade Grasiani

Mead High School