



Fremont Ross announced Mark Gedeon's resignation Friday as boys varsity basketball coach. FILE PHOTOS

Ross boys coach Mark Gedeon stepping away

Resignation aims to give time for family, teaching priorities

Matthew Horn
Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Fremont Ross boys basketball coach Mark Gedeon thought about his team and did work related to his team on Christmas Day every year.

He didn't take time off he didn't have to from basketball during school breaks for winter holidays. The season didn't matter as he didn't really take a summer vacation.

A lot of things will change for Gedeon after announcing that he is resigning as coach.

"Over the last 16 months, my health hasn't been where it should be," Gedeon said Friday. "The demands of my teaching schedule — seven classes per day — and the demands of the head coaching position put my health down on my priority list.

"I missed a game two years ago and never allowed myself the chance to recover. The energy and effort, even on the weekends. Fourteen-hour days. I have high expectations as a teacher, coach and father. It's challenging."

Gedeon, 49, finally took a step back after the season this year.

"I allowed myself some time and visited some doctors to see how I can get to where I need to be," he said. "I won't be 100 percent by September ... basketball is year-round. It's not fair to the players or athletic department to not give proper time to get a coach in.



Mark Gedeon was Fremont Ross boys varsity basketball coach for 23 seasons.

"It's a difficult, hard decision to make. For a change, I have to put myself first. I can't keep pace and keep going the way I've been going. I have no idea what the future will hold. Obviously, it will still be as a teacher here."

Makes noise early

Gedeon became Ross' varsity coach for the 1995-1996 season after five years at the junior varsity level.

"I wanted to give the program stability," he said. "There had been constant turnover with coaches. I always felt basketball could succeed in Fremont. It was a goal I had and I had players who shared it."

Ross qualified for regionals in 1997

for the first time since 1930. The Little Giants earned a league championship in 2001 for the first time in 47 years.

"That set the bar high for our program for a long time," he said. "I wanted the court to be an extension of the classroom, creating upstanding members of society. I hope we played team basketball and got the most of their ability.

"People said it was a football town. I said great. Embrace it. Basketball is in the winter, it can be both. That was the philosophy for a while to change that mindset."

Gedeon's career varsity record is 255-257. Ross averaged 16 wins a season from 1996-2003, including three straight Great Lakes League championships from 2001-2003.

Ross (18-4) was ranked 11th in the state in 2003. The Little Giants captured a fourth league title in the Greater Buckeye Conference in 2006.

Building relationships

"The relationship with the young men is different than it is in the classroom," Gedeon said. "You sweat with them and you invest time emotionally and physically trying to accomplish something together.

"That will be different. The competitive juices. I've always considered myself competitive. The relationships are

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first. Education is a people profession. But I'll miss the competition and the crowd at the Purple Pit."

District championships and league crowns make for easy career highlights for most. Gedeon looked at more than wins.

"I've gotten so much satisfaction in so many different ways," he said. "Even the teams that didn't win could have some of the hardest-working players."

They knew what they'd get from their coach. Gedeon has no regrets, but he wouldn't have complained if the demands of the position weren't so demanding.

"Coaching high school sports is challenging with the hats you wear," he said.

"It would be nice if you could blow the whistle for two hours and then separate things, but you're a father figure, counselor, mentor, coach, teacher, friend.

"There are so many hats. I will miss it. My whole adult life I've been in the coaching profession."

Now, Gedeon can experience things he didn't have time for or didn't even think about.

"I hope people understand it's a difficult decision for me," he said. "I have a passion for working with young people and I truly love Fremont and Fremont Ross and want the best for them.

"This decision is mine. I'm not getting forced out. Few people have a chance to say when they're done and while it's not easy, this is the time."

mhorn@gannett.com

419-307-4892

Twitter: @MatthewHornNH

Instagram: @matthewchorn