

Marquette Catholic welcomes Joe Burchett as new boys soccer coach

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ALTON – Joe Burchett has some plans for Marquette Catholic's boys soccer program.

Burchett was introduced as the Explorers' new coach in a conference at the school Wednesday afternoon; he takes over from Jeremy Sanfillippo, who recently stepped down from the position.

“I knew Jeremy from club (soccer) in the past, and I knew Jack Holmes (Marquette's athletic director); Jack used to be the principal at St. John Neumann (in Maryville). My daughter attended school at St. John Neumann and I knew Jack from there. Jeremy had called me and said he needed an assistant; I had a lot of respect for Jeremy and I said, 'yeah, I'll come'.

“The next day, Jack called me and asked me the same thing; they made me feel wanted and welcomed and I was happy to come on board.”

Burchett has coached in the Lou Fusz Soccer Club program in the St. Louis area, starting at the under-10 level through the under-18 level; he had also coached with the Collinsville United club and at Belleville Althoff for three seasons before joining with Sanfillippo as an assistant last season.

“The numbers for soccer here are bigger,” Burchett said. “When I first started at Althoff, we had 24 players total from freshman to senior, so that was a seriously small number; this year, if everyone returns from last year, I've got 14 new freshmen at registration and I'll have 42 – that's a big number.”

“When I was at St. John Neumann, I knew Joe,” Holmes said. “I knew he was right in the middle of the soccer world there (in the Collinsville-Maryville area). I don't know a lot about soccer, but I knew he was highly enthusiastic about soccer and that he was highly respected. He was a pretty easy choice for us, even though the other candidates were good, he was an easy choice.

“We feel very fortunate; we think we made a good hire.”

Burchett isn't planning on making many changes from how Sanfillippo did things with the Explorers. “There won't be a lot (of changes),” Burchett said. “There was a lot of things Jeremy did that are similar to what I did, and I think that's why we got along so well. Some of the exercises he emphasized I might emphasize something else, but I learned things from him.

“Some of the boys liked some of the things he did, so we'll implement the things that fit; the system of play during a game may be different. I'll play around with the boys a bit and see what I like before I stick with something.”

Burchett sees taking the Explorer job as a good opportunity. “I feel blessed to become a part of it; we have quality players, a lot of quality players. I think we're going to have a good squad; I think we'll play well.”