

Marquette Catholic Hires McElrath to be Head Football Coach

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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ALTON - Marquette Catholic High School announced the hiring of Leon McElrath III to be the next head football coach at a press conference Friday afternoon.

"We were fortunate to have more than twenty-two applicants for the head coach opening. We interviewed nine very qualified coaches, including several successful head coaches. The search committee was pleased to have so many well-qualified candidates who want to coach at Marquette. We believe we have found the right person to lead our football program for years to come," said Andy Blasingim, the Athletic Chair of the Marquette Catholic Board of Directors.

"I'm honored to be selected. Marquette has a strong football tradition and I can't wait to get started," said McElrath, who for the last two years has been the Head Coach at McCluer North in St. Louis. "Coach Mac took over a McCluer North program that was 0-10 before he started. He returned them to a 7-3 record in only two years and he comes highly recommended," said Marquette Catholic Athletic Director Jack Holmes.

"I believe we can do great things at Marquette. I'm looking forward to meeting the players already in the program and those in the school who might be interested in playing," said McElrath. "Marquette has a great reputation for preparing kids for

college. I'm a big believer in helping these players get to the next level if that is something they want to do.

"Our goal is to get the numbers up, and get the underclassmen the experience they need to develop", McElrath said. "We will be disciplined and I like to play fast. This is a fun system to play in."

McElrath is a graduate of MacMurray College, where he was a 2nd team All-Conference Offensive Lineman. At Webster Groves High School, McElrath was a 1st Team All-Conference selection, playing under two-time state championship coach Cliff Ice. He was a team captain in both programs.

"Coach Mac" will also teach PE and Health at Marquette. "Having the head coach in the building was a major priority for us," said Holmes.

Coach McElrath and his wife Alisha, a school psychologist, have two children.

Marquette Catholic is a co-educational, college-prep school of 420 students in Alton, Illinois, founded in 1927. Marquette's athletic teams have won more than 130 IHSA Regional, Sectional or Super-Sectional Championships, as well as appeared in 30 IHSA State Finals and won 6 IHSA State Championships.

The Marquette football program has qualified for the IHSA playoffs 25 times, with a State Championship and Semi-Final appearance, as well as 4 Quarterfinal appearances, most recently in 2012. Marquette Catholic graduates have also enjoyed professional success. Tom Roth enjoyed a stint with the New Orleans Saints and Los Angeles Raiders, while Craig Hentrich enjoyed a long career with the Green Bay Packers and Tennessee Titans. Michael Ford plays currently for the Detroit Lions.



