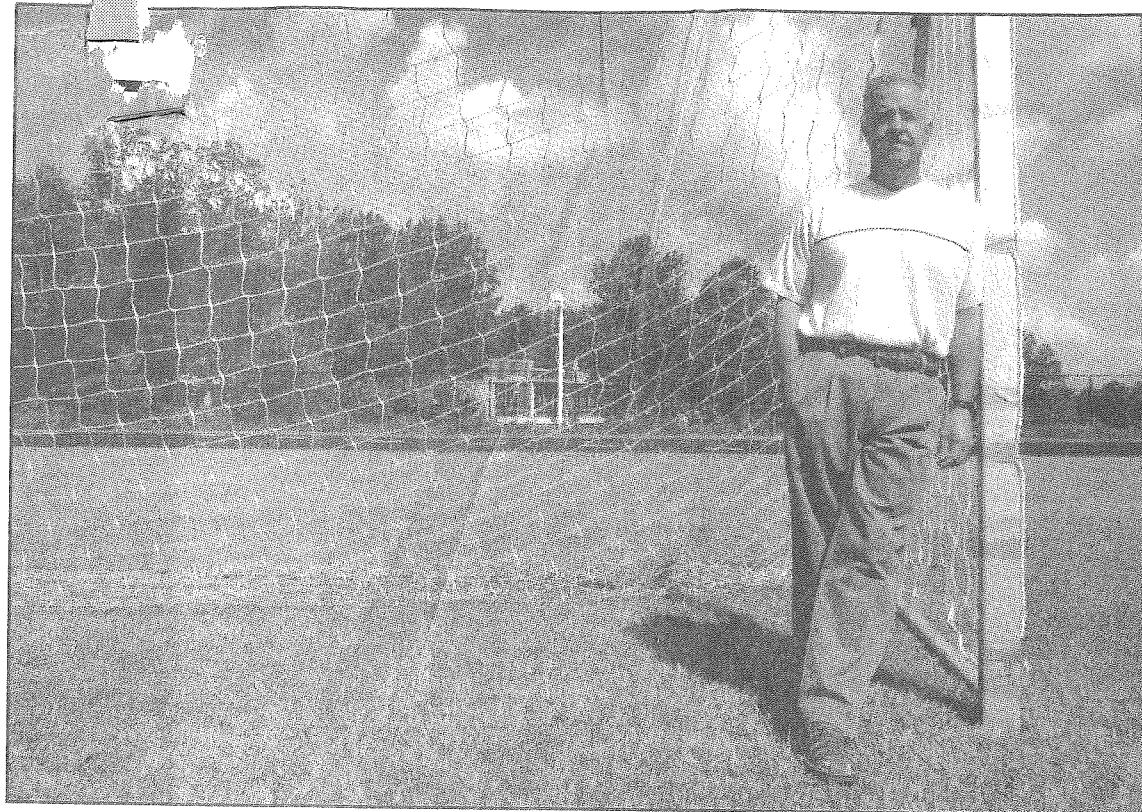




By JOHN FLAVELL / OF THE DAILY INDEPENDENT
 Frank Sloan stands in front of the Tomcat soccer net. Sloan has retired from the Ashland school system, but will remain as the Tomcats' soccer coach at least through this season.

Ashland educator calling it quits

■ Sloan remains boys soccer coach

By MARK MAYNARD
 OF THE DAILY INDEPENDENT

Franks Sloan is a coach for all seasons.

He seemed to always have the golden touch with Ashland

sports.

Sloan achieved a rare coaching three-peat, leading the Tomcats to regional championships in three different sports — baseball, girls basketball and soccer.

After 27 years in the Ashland school system, Sloan has decided to retire from his job

as assistant principal.

For now anyway, he will remain the boys soccer coach at Ashland.

"The thing I'll always have fond memories of is the caliber of kids who played for me in every sport," Sloan said, deflecting credit to the players. "I was fortunate to have good players and good people."

Sloan, 49, has been coaching Tomcat soccer since 1985. His only regional title in that sport came in 1991 when Stuart Smith was ramming in goals

“

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”

—Frank Sloan
 Retired
 Ashland
 administrator

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at a state-record pace.

"Stuart was definitely a factor there," he said. "He was a great athlete. He still has the record for most goals scored in a season (59)."

While he coached soccer longer than any other sport, he also guided the Tomcats to their last regional baseball championship in 1979.

Again, Sloan says, it was the players.

"We did have some great players — Drew Hall, Daniel Smith, Donnie Allen, Greg Swift, Kevin Gothard," he said. "Tim Sexton and Tommy Welch are guys people may not remember, but they were tremendous players."

Mark Swift, the current athletic director at Ashland, played baseball for Sloan his senior year.

"My senior year of baseball was as much fun as I ever had athletically," Swift said. "He was laid-back, but he knew how to motivate you, too."

"Frank's a good man. He'll be missed around here."

Sloan's almost never had a bad coaching experience with the Tomcats. He said the players wouldn't let that happen because of their pride.

"The one thing I always noticed about the kids at Ashland is they were very coachable and very much wanted to win," he said. "I heard about that Tomcat tradition when I first came here and it's true. You had to take a lot of pride into coaching, too."

While coaching the Kittens, Sloan led that team for five years and won a regional championship in 1983.

"I won and got out of it," he said. "That was when I began my stint as assistant principal. I hated to give it up but they wanted me to put my efforts into being an administrator."

"That was a great deal of fun coaching the girls."

However, two years later, the soccer call came.

Sloan had played college soccer at Morehead State University. At Ashland, he replaced Doc McKinney, who

a junior this year at Ashland, looks to be a key player for his father.

Frank and his wife Cheri also have a younger son, Christian, in the Ashland school system.

Despite the extra hours that comes with coaching, Sloan said his wife has been behind him.

"It's something that never caused any problems," he said. "She always backed me on everything I did."

Ashland principal Janice Ledford said Sloan will be sorely missed on the administration side of things.

"We came here (to Paul G. Blazer High School) together at the same time, 11 years ago," she said. "I've never been here without him being my assistant principal. It's a vacancy that's hard to fill."

Sloan also served as an assistant principal for Herb Conley at Verity Middle School.

"Herb and I opened up Verity in 1983," he said. "That was tougher than any team I've ever coached but working with somebody like Herb really helped it."

"Janice has been great, too, at Blazer and I worked many years with Jerry Umberger. Working with quality people made the job easier."

Herb Conley is even a godfather to Sloan's oldest son, Brandon.

As a coach, Sloan has been named All-Area Coach of the Year twice in soccer and once in basketball.

While he won two regional championships in baseball, the All-Area team didn't come along until after he was out of the sport.

Sloan also coached girls track and junior high football in the Ashland system.

As for what's ahead, Sloan wasn't sure.

"I just thought it was time to do something else," he said. "I'll be finding another job. If things work out with soccer, that'll be great."

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