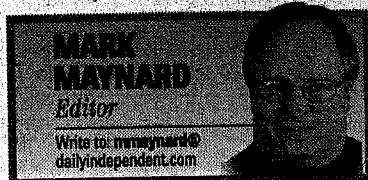


Sloan was coach for all seasons



Frank Sloan was one of the rare breed of high school coaches in north-eastern Kentucky history.

He's actually legendary.

Sloan was a head coach who guided the Ashland Tomcats (and Kittens) to regional championships in three sports — baseball, girls' basketball and soccer — during a career that spanned more than three decades.

He coached something — and sometimes a couple of some things — for 32 consecutive years from 1973-2005.

Few can say they coached 32 years.

Fewer can say they have regional titles in three sports.

Sloan coached some of Ashland's greatest athletes, players like Drew Hall and Jody Hamilton in baseball, Audrey Arthur in girls basketball and Stuart Smith and Clayton Hill in soccer, to name but a few.

"Ashland always had good kids," he said. "It makes it easier to coach in a place like that."

Sloan didn't mind the pressures that came along with being the Tomcat coach. "I'd rather coach at a place where everybody wanted to beat you. That was Ashland."

Sloan and his wife, Cheri, are leaving Ashland at the end of the week for a retirement life in Hilton Head, S.C. They purchased a home in one of the South's best vacation spots.

"I almost have to pinch myself still," he said.

But Sloan said he'll never forget his days of coaching Ashland sports. His journey started in 1973 when Rex Miller called and told him about an opening to teach German. Sloan's plan was to being a graduate assistant coach for Morehead State soccer, where he had been a player for the Eagles.

"I was interviewed on a Friday and teaching by Tuesday," he said. "What a better place to be than Ashland? They were strong athletically and academically."

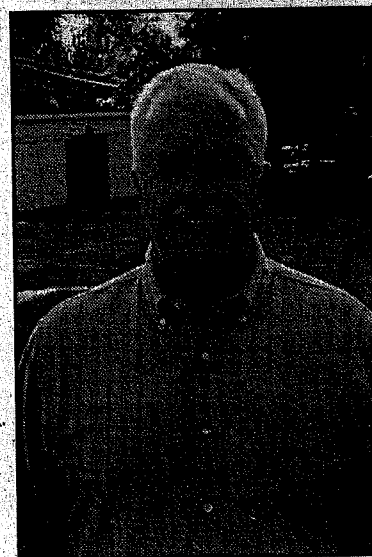
Sloan said when he was a freshman in high school his goal was to become a coach and teacher. He realized that dream right out of college.

It wasn't long until he was coaching at Ashland, going to Putnam Junior High School to coach football and basketball.

Sloan took over the Tomcats' high school baseball program in 1976 and inherited some outstanding players, including Hamilton, Mark Moore, Donnie Allen, Jon Hart, Scott Crank, Kevin Gothard, Steve Rolen, Daniel Smith, Hall and many others.

Sloan was an outstanding high

See **MAYNARD** / Page A5



Sloan

Maynard

From Page A4

school catcher in New Jersey so he knew a little something about the game. The players took to his disciplined style but he was always quick to give credit where credit is due.

"Seventy-five percent of being an effective coach is having effective players," he said. "The other 25 percent is discipline."

I was fortunate that Frank's middle son, Jordan, was the same age as my son. We "coached" together during some early youth league baseball. I'll never forget Frank teaching the bunting technique to our players in a backyard. It was so simple yet so thorough — and the Padres became one of the best bunting teams the Ashland National Rookie League had ever seen. He was good with explaining fundamentals to kids of any age. We had a lot of fun that year from the dugout, too, along with our fun-loving head coach Sam Richardson. I'm sure none of us will forget it.

Sloan never bought into the 40-game high school seasons that were starting toward the end of his baseball coaching career. He always wanted more time on the practice field.

"When do those teams practice?" he asked. "That's when you work on things that aren't

working. I never understood the 35- and 40-game seasons. Practice is just as important as games. Plus, how many teams have enough pitching for that kind of season? Not very many."

Sloan, 62, was always respected by players and opposing teams for his knowledge of whatever sport he was coaching. He won numerous Coach of the Year accolades, including a couple in baseball from the days of the Ohio-Kentucky Athletic Conference. He was All-Area Coach of the Year several times in soccer, including when leading the Tomcats to their only Final Four appearance in that sport.

Sloan's mother and father moved to Ashland during his sophomore year at Morehead. It became home to him and them.

Sloan's father was in the service and the family moved from place to place. They were stationed in Germany for eight years which is where Frank learned the language. His mother was his biggest fan, going anywhere the Tomcats went and cheering for her son. She was never shy about offering her opinions either.

"Mom was pretty outspoken," he said.

Sloan was in the classroom for 10 years and then became an assistant principal under Herb Conley, who he considered a role model both in coaching and administrative work, at

Verity Middle School. Conley and Sloan together returned Verity into a disciplined school with some tough love. "We did a lot of padding," Sloan said. "Herb was great. He did an amazing job at Verity."

Sloan's success as Ashland's boys soccer coach, besides the Final Four appearance, included coaching Hill, who went on to a scholarship at UK and the year Smith set a state scoring record. He also coached two of his sons, Brandon and Jordan, who were both accomplished All-Area players. Brandon was even

named the All-Area Soccer Player of the Year. Jordan was an All-Area soccer player and also kicked for the football team where he made honorable mention All-Area. Frank's youngest son, Christian, was a swimmer for the Tomcats.

"They were all good athletes, which made it easier for me," he said. "I'm proud of all three of them."

Sloan has been retired for several years and many asked him about his coaching records and success. He decided to do a little research in the Boyd County Public Library and was admit-

tedly astounded at the body of work.

"It's not something you think about at the time it's happening," he said.

But it was never about the records for Sloan. It was always about the kids and it was about winning, which he did in every sport he guided.

Frank met Cheri Hambrick in Ashland and they married in 1977. Cheri, 56, is retiring from Crabbe Elementary after 20 years as an in-

structional assistant this week. The retirement house in Hixon Head is calling them both.

"But Ashland will always be home," Frank said. "I'll be keeping up with what's happening around here. The boys are still here so, hopefully, we'll have a place when we come back to visit."

MARK MAYNARD can be reached at mmaynard@dailyindependent.com or (606) 326-2648.

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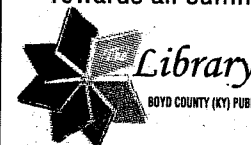


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Drawings, specifications, and the project manual may be obtained by contacting LYNN IMAGING @ 859/255-1021. Questions should be directed in writing to the C.M.'s attention:

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