

McIntyre returning to SoCal roots

Braves AD made big impact in brief tenure with Justin

By MARTY JAMES
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When it comes time to dedicating the new and improved Braves Field at Justin-Siena High School later this year, one of the key figures who took an active role in the \$2 million redevelopment project won't be in town to receive public recognition from school officials and community leaders for his work and vision for the facility.

Derek McIntyre recently informed Justin-Siena's administration that he will be leaving after two years as the Braves' athletic director to become the associate director of admissions and head football coach at Sage Hill High School in Newport Coast, Calif.

Sage Hill, a private Division V school that opened in 2000, is in the CIF Southern Section's Academy League.

It was McIntyre, 39, who stepped forward and talked with Brother Robert J. Wickman, F.S.C., president of Justin-Siena, about the need to upgrade athletic facilities, ensuing for a better playing field for football and soccer teams. The same held true for track and field, McIntyre said.

"It must have been within the first month he was here, he came to me and said, 'We really need to look at FieldTurf and an all-weather track,'" Wickman said Thursday.

"Derek had a huge role to play, much more than I did in terms of some of the technical details of selecting the vendors to come in and looking at the bids and working with a committee.

"Early on, Derek said to me, 'If we're going to grow our program here, we have to do something about the field, because the field is over-used. It's not going to stay in the condition we need to have it stay in.' He had experience at the last school he was at in putting a field in, so he knew the benefits of it."

The installation of a synthetic playing field, to be used for football, soccer and lacrosse, and an all-weather track is expected to be completed sometime in August. Justin-Siena's board of trustees and the Lasallian Education Corp., approved the donor-initiated project, which has a private-public partnership.

School officials expect to be able to use the new field Aug. 18.

P.E. classes and other Justin-Siena teams will also be able to use the complex. The Braves will share the stadium with at least two organizations, Napa Saints youth football and the Napa Junior Lacrosse Club.

Bill Dodd, a Napa County supervisor and long-time supporter of the school, is in charge of the project's fundraising campaign. Carmen Policy, a former San Francisco 49ers front office executive who has relocated to the Napa Valley, is the honorary chair of the fundraising committee.

"It's just another part of the school's intention to help serve the community and serve our students," said McIntyre. "The turf field and all-weather track would make a big impact not only on our current school community, but also the greater Napa community as well.

"That's part of our goal — trying to serve the community. I think our athletic facilities have continued to improve as we go along. It's important, because if you want to offer a quality education, you have to offer quality resources for those kids to continue to grow. We've had a great committee to work with. The project is now in the final stages and a lot of people are going to benefit from it."

Since 2006, McIntyre has been in charge of a department budget, schedules, equipment and overseeing boys and girls varsity, JV and freshman teams, and the many coaches involved with those programs.

He started seasonal awards banquets to involve each of the fall, winter and spring sports teams, and sends out a weekly Braves Report, an e-mail blast that goes to school staff, families of Justin-Siena students and alumni that includes game schedules, newspaper stories and other information.

Organizing seasonal orientation meetings for coaches has also been part of his responsibilities.

Improvements have been made to the school's baseball and softball fields under McIntyre's watch. He is also responsible for scheduling summer camps.

"I think Derek made his mark early and certainly opened up a lot of lines of communication," said Wickman.

"Sometimes in schools, a coach might complain about the AD. I can tell you honestly, I've never had a complaint from any coach here about the AD. I think that's remarkable.

"His focus is on the student-athlete and what's best for kids."

As a small school, Justin-Siena plays in the Marin County Athletic League, part of the CIF North Coast Section. Year after year, the Braves do well against schools with larger enrollments and regularly appear in the playoffs.

Justin-Siena is a Catholic, Lasallian, college preparatory high school.

“We’ve accomplished a lot of very positive things here,” said McIntyre. “I think through Brother Robert’s leadership and this administration, we’re heading in the right direction and continuing a great tradition here. I feel strongly that we’ve been able to accomplish a lot.

“We’ve got great coaches here who have done a fantastic job. We’ve had a lot of success this year athletically and it’s a testament to our coaches. They make my job so much easier. In the short period of time it’s been great to be a part of this school community and to watch the impact that athletics has overall on the school community.”

McIntyre has a football background, having played at Cleveland High in Reseda, then Los Angeles Valley Community College and Cal State Northridge.

He was a First-Team All-Western States Conference center at LA Valley.

He was the head football coach for eight years at Viewpoint and led the Patriots to the 2002 Heritage League title and to the CIF Southern Section playoffs three times.

McIntyre was AD and the P.E. chairman at the Fairfield School-Van Nuys for two years.

He was also the head football coach and AD at The Bishop’s School, a private prep school which is in the CIF San Diego Section. He played an active role in the construction and development of their new state-of-the-art athletics facilities, including an aquatics complex.

He said returning to Southern California is a great opportunity for his family and a challenge professionally.

“I get to coach again, which is something I really enjoy and am passionate about. It’s in my blood and it’s part of who I am. It’s a great way to connect with the kids. Also I get to work with the admissions team, which is a new opportunity. Things really seemed like a good fit.”

Justin-Siena principal Noel Hesser is heading up the search for a new AD.

The school has the full-time position advertised nationally on the National Catholic Education Association job bank.

There will be an interview committee.

“We want someone who can not only manage and lead our interscholastic programs, but also keep developing the summer programs,” said Wickman.

McIntyre and his wife, Ashley, have a son, Dylan (6), and daughter, Alyvia (5).

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