

Bradley Named New Port St. Joe Basketball Coach

The Gulf County School Board approved Port St. Joe High School principal Chris Earley's recommendation of Ronald M. Bradley as the new Tiger Sharks boys' basketball coach during Tuesday's meeting.

"We're glad to have him on board," said Earley. "It's been a long hard process."

After advertising the position for the third time, Port St. Joe High School found a replacement for Vernon Eppinette, who resigned after last season's seventh straight trip to the "Final-Four." During Eppinette's 10 years at the reins of the basketball program, he led the Tiger Sharks to five state championships, four of them in a row.

"We're glad he was available to come to Port St. Joe, and believe he will continue the tradition of success," concluded Earley.

Bradley is married to his high school sweetheart, Jan, who is very active in his career. They have four children and seven grandchildren.

Coach Bradley also brings in an impressive resumé to Port St. Joe, accumulating 1,198 wins to only 307 losses (845-216 as a boys' coach and 353-91 while coaching girls' teams) in his 40 years of coaching. During that time he has posted 25 seasons with 20 or more wins with best records of 35-1, 34-1, 29-1, 29-3 (twice) and 27-2 (twice). Bradley's teams have won three state championships, six state finalists, and 15 region championships.

His girls' teams have had 11 seasons with 20 plus wins, with one state finalist and seven region championships. Bradley has been the winningest coach in Georgia now for several years, and is near the top of the all-time national list.

Coach Bradley's accomplishments include: being inducted

into the State of Georgia Sports Hall of Fame in 1997; received the Georgia Athletic Coaches Association's highest honor as the only basketball coach to receive their

na All-Star Coach; National East-West All-Star Coach; Georgia All-Stars European Tour Coach which was undefeated in six games in Europe; the Ronald M.

said Coach Bradley. "I really felt like Mr. Earley and staff did a great job of getting every thing together, and it all went together—a natural for both sides. We took a year off (from coaching) and did some traveling. I always knew that I would like to coach again if a good opportunity arose, and it did."

After earning seven letters in baseball and basketball at the University of Georgia, being named the baseball MVP in 1957 and a brief tenure at a recreation department in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Bradley took his first high school coaching job at Newton County High School in Covington, Georgia. During a nine year span of his 18 years at Newton County, his basketball teams set a national record 129 straight wins at home. In another 10-year span, every starter except three received college scholarships. He then moved on to George Walton Academy in Monroe where he spent 12 years. Bradley also coached five years at Trinity Christian in Dublin, three years at Loganville, and the latest place was Piedmont Academy.

"From what I'm hearing from conversations with people in Port St. Joe, they are the type of athletes I want to coach. I've heard that all of coach Eppinette's teams were well disciplined, fundamentally sound and have a lot of desire," said Bradley. "If you get those three components, you can be successful no matter what you do."

When asked what style of basketball he would run at Port St. Joe, Bradley commented, "Our style of offense is going to depend

on personnel, and I haven't met a single one of those guys. But we like to play a game that's fun—a game that's fun for the spectators and for the players. If you're fundamentally sound in what your system requires you're going to be successful."

"I wish we could get started tomorrow, but obviously there are rules that I have to go by, and I do believe in going by them. I will meet with the players and the cheerleaders Thursday morning, and let them know who I am. I don't want the job very loud right now because it's football season—A number of the athletes that I will have on the basketball team are participating in football, and I want those youngsters to concentrate on football and finish up an outstanding season. So far as basketball is concerned, we won't make a lot of racket until the kids are done with their fall programs and ready to work," concluded Bradley.

Coach Bradley has had 56

All-State honorees, one All-American player and several honorable mention All-American players.

Bradley also served as a football coach with a 139-69-6 record over 19 seasons, including a state championship, four regional championships. He was named state Coach of the Year once, regional Coach of the Year four times.

In baseball, he posted a 158-60 record, over 18 seasons. He had championships in regional five times, and two state finalists. He was named Region Coach of the Year five times, and had teams in the post-season playoffs 10 times.

Good luck and welcome to Port St. Joe.



Ronald and Jan Bradley

"Circle Of Achievement Award;" honored as State Coach of the Year three times; Region Coach of the Year 14 times; National High School Athletic Coaches Association District IV Coach of the Year; North-South All-Star Head Coach four times; Georgia-South Caroli-

Bradley Gymnasium in Covington was dedicated in his honor January 16, 2000; and he was the Atlanta Tipoff Club's 2000 recipient of the "Steve Schmidt Award" for outstanding contribution to Georgia's basketball.

"I can't wait to get started,"