

Lewis resigns as Kennedy football coach

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Tim Lewis, the winningest football coach in school history, has resigned at Kennedy High School after compiling a 78-65 record in 14 years.

Lewis will stay at Kennedy as a physical education teacher and head coach of the Kennedy strength and conditioning program, which he described as his true love and passion.

The Cougars finished 8-4 this season and reached the quarterfinals of the Class 4A playoffs.

Lewis began thinking about stepping aside as the football coach before the season began and informed Kennedy athletic director of his final decision Wednesday.

Lewis, 44, said he prefers to focus on his job as the strength and conditioning coach and let somebody else coach the football team. He said Brian White and Matt Miers, two of his top assistant coaches, will both apply for the job.

More and more, Lewis said he was spending a good portion of his time as the strength and conditioning coach and less time on football, by his own volition. He was reading articles, searching the Internet for information and talking to other strength and conditioning coaches.

He said he's "extremely passionate" about strength and conditioning and has been ever since the end of his playing days at Central College in 1992.

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"I found that I was spending less time on football," he said. "I've put enough time into this program that I didn't want it to slide because I wasn't putting enough time working on it.

"I'm going to go with my passion and go with my heart and what I feel. I really, really enjoy the strength training part of it.

"The nice thing about it is, it's everything I want out of coaching and minus the things I don't like," he said. "There's no equipment (to oversee), there's no parents to deal with.

"It's all the good things. You get positive results, you get to work with kids. I love it."

Lewis also said he's uncomfortable with the growing trend in football that emphasizes club teams, youth programs and summer 7-on-7 tournaments that lead to football becoming a year-round sport.

"I just refuse to do that," he said. "If it's winter, they need to be focused on basketball and wrestling and not on football.

"I hit that fork in the road where I either had to conform and start doing those things I truly didn't believe in, or I had to walk away from it.

"My beliefs are that you have to let kids be kids. I'm not a believer of pounding football down people's throats."

Lewis joined the Kennedy coaching staff in 1996 as the defensive coordinator. He became the head coach in 2000 and led the Cougars to nine playoff berths, including trips to the quarterfinals in 2005, 2010 and this year.

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Kennedy won the Valley Division title in the Mississippi Valley Conference in 2007.

Lewis served as the head coach at Ackley-Geneva from 1993 through 1995. His overall career record is 96-75 in 17 seasons.