

Ausmus held responsible for Tigers' "unsuccessful" season



Katelyn's Korner

By Katelyn Carney
EDITOR

Professional baseball's major league consists of 32 teams, all seeking one single ultimate prize: a World Series championship.

But let's be honest with each other. The odds of any single team making it to the World Series are stacked against them. Even the best of the best face uphill battles and unavoidable feats that force them to stray from the path of victory.

As history tends to prove itself repeatedly, there always has to be a fall guy for the 31 teams who aren't fortunate enough to be singing "We are the Champions." And heaven forbid the players signing multi-million-dollar contracts to be on the field, playing the game, be the ones to blame. Instead, the organization puts the pressure on their General Manager, who never touches a bat or catches a ball, for not bringing home the gold.

Rumors flew this week that Brad Ausmus, manager of the Detroit Tigers, would be fired at the end of the season. This didn't come as a shock to anyone. Finishing last in your division is rarely paramount in obtaining job security. The Tigers, who have been perennial contenders, were seen by most pre-season pundits as serious prospects to get to the World Series. Falling far short of expectations, particularly with 86-year-old owner Mike Ilitch, who is desperate to see his baseball team win a championship, is a recipe for "pink slip" written in bold.

We expect success, we have standards, and if you can't live up to them, then you have to be shown the door. But how would we fare if measured by these standards?

There is no arguing that Brad Ausmus was qualified to be hired as a major league manager. He played 18 years in the bigs, was a three-time Gold Glove winner and an All-Star in 1999. He ranked third all-time with 12,839 putouts as a catcher. Ausmus was a terrific student of the game and was known as a cerebral player not just because of the intricacies of the position he played but because he graduated from an Ivy League school, Dartmouth, in 1991. Ausmus was highly regarded by teammates, lauded for his baseball smarts, was bilingual (an absolute plus considering the influx of Latin American players), had an engaging personality and was widely considered managerial material once his playing career was over. His only drawback when hired by the Tigers was his lack of experience.

Ausmus is on the chopping block because of the Tigers' win-loss record this season. Currently, they sit 10 games under the .500 mark.

Terrible job, right?

Well, a deeper look at the team reveals that the team diverged on a path seemingly created by the devil himself. Verlander and Cabrera were both injured for two months of the season. Victor Martinez was basically playing on one leg, hitting only nine home runs in comparison to last year's 30. Our primary closer, Joe Nathan, was out for the season after the first game of the year. These events, among others, led the organization to believe that Ausmus was not cut out for this job's requirements.

In 2008, coach Gary Bennett led our girls basketball team to their first state championship. By this time, Bennett had been coaching the team for well over a decade. Despite not achieving a championship in that time, he was given the opportunity to continue to mentor and train a team which in the professional world would have been deemed unsuccessful because they hadn't "won" yet.

Had Bennett been fired after one season for not making it to the state finals, then he would not have been successful in attaining a championship in the future.

The point is that Ausmus is being evaluated unfairly. He was hired last August and given a broken team. Now the club's ready to give him the swift kick of its boot, straight to the curb because in their eyes, his team couldn't rise to the challenge under his care.

Would teachers ask a student to ace a class when he's only given half of the material? Would parents deem their child's high school career a failure if she isn't valedictorian? The world of sports may only see through the lens of victory, but little do we realize what a narrow viewpoint that can be.

The Tigers may not have been successful this year, but we shouldn't send Ausmus to the guillotine quite yet. He has yet to fail us under reasonable circumstances. Let's not forget that.

Fresh faces find the field



LAUREN SEXTON



LAUREN SEXTON



LAUREN SEXTON

FAR LEFT: The varsity team watches the game from the bench.
LEFT: Junior Carmen Castronero jogs off the field toward the team's bench.

As the fall season progresses, the field hockey team learns to cope and bond with the newly hired coaching staff.

By Lauren Sexton & Bella Lawson
ASSISTANT EDITOR & STAFF REPORTER

Fall brings more changes than just the color of the leaves. It also brings new classes, clubs, players and, in this case, coaches. Both the varsity and JV field hockey teams got new ones this season.

Shelby Stone was hired to coach JV while Alexa Quinlan and Paula Cornwall took over varsity as co-coaches.

"I played field hockey and lacrosse in college, and I knew I wanted to stick with it after graduating from college," Stone said. "When I got contacted about this opportunity, I got really excited not only because it is a way to stay involved, but to do new things and have some fun. And it's worked out."

Searching for experienced coaching staff wasn't easy, but Athletic Director Brian Shelton said he lucked out when three skillful college graduates showed up to his office.

"We had a search going on for a little while. We posted out to the website through the district, and that goes out to different search engines, as well as I had a couple emails sent to all staff up in the whole district," Shelton said.

The process of seeking out the new coaches involved lots of work. Grosse Pointe South had heard about North's search and recommended Paula Cornwall, Quinlan and Stone. After Shelton's interview process, the three were divided into their various roles.

Stone is very pleased with the progression of the team's athletic ability and their overall attitude in the game.

"I'm looking forward to a lot this season. We have gotten better as each game has progressed. They're really climbing each game and implementing things we are doing in practice, which is really awe-

some to see. I really just look forward to every game, because I get to see them play and how much they have improved since the last," Stone said. "As of now, my plan is to come back next year. Things could change when I go to France to teach English, but as I see it now, I will hopefully be back, which I'm excited about."

Last season, both teams felt they struggled. But with the arrival of the new coaches, team skills and morale have improved.

Since the coaches are so young, they're able to relate better to the players, which the team believes has made the team more successful.

"I would say the team is closer because some of the girls that didn't play last year came back this year, and so we all get to play with them again. And so, I think we're better," junior Jackie Veneri said. "This year's coaches are a little younger, and they can relate to us better. They played all through high school, so they know what we need to learn and how we can improve and stuff. And relationships are a lot better this year."

Veneri is not the only one who agrees that having a younger coaching staff is beneficial for the teams.

"I think being a younger coach is nice because we can kind of share some, things to joke about whether it's online and stuff," Quinlan said. "I have a good connection with the team, (and I) like to crack some jokes every now and then."

Senior Caroline Bock is on the varsity team but had to opt out last year due to a busy travel hockey schedule. She feels the improvements since her sophomore year are great.

"I really like the new coaches. I think they're really experienced, and they know what they are doing," Bock said. "I think everyone's individual skills have improved, and we're also really close because we all appreciate the new coaches, so we're all determined to be better players and win."



SYDNEY BENSON



SYDNEY BENSON

Sports facility developments delayed for fall season

By Sonny Mulpuri & Billy Steiglemen
INTERNS

This summer, three fall sports teams experienced new changes to their programs. Tennis, football and swimming all received funds for new facilities. The projects started on July 1 and were intended to be finished before the start of their fall seasons.

"It was new budget year, and it was just time. We needed these new facilities on our campus," Athletic Director Brian Shelton said.

The biggest project was the building of the new tennis courts along Morningside. For the past 16 years, the boys and girls tennis teams have played at Lakefront Park, commonly referred to as the Woods Park, but this summer the tennis program was relocated back to the school's campus.

"I think just when we have our own courts, we'll feel at home because right now, we don't really feel at home at the Woods Park. It'll be more like a home and something we can protect," senior co-captain Tyler Scoggin said.

The tennis team now has the chance to play in front of a home crowd for the first time. Because all their matches happen in a private park off of campus, the tennis team lacks many student fans supporting and cheering them on. The last time the tennis team played on campus was 14 years ago.

"We can have more people watching us, which will be a good change," Scoggin said. "And now people can come watch us for regionals. People can watch and cheer for us more than at the Woods Park because it's out of the way. No one really comes there to watch."

However, the new courts are running behind schedule, and the boys' tennis team is facing difficulties. They may not be able to play as much on the new courts, which may affect their preparation for regionals. Newer courts won't have the wear that those at Lakefront Park do.

"(Morningside) is an old farming area, and being close to the water, it was also a swamp area. They found a lot of old farming equipment, and it also needed a city inspection, which also put the courts behind schedule," Shelton said. "It will be done in the next month, though."

Other teams' renovations haven't fared much better. When football tryouts took place in August, the new turf on the football field wasn't finished, and the football teams were forced to have their tryouts on the baseball field.

"For varsity, it was a minor inconvenience because they usually use (the football field) in the preseason, but it was

something that needed to be done, and they did it and did it right, so it's in good shape now," freshman football coach Jason Hill said.

Over the years, weather gradually wears out the turf of a field. The artificial grass gets shorter when it gets worn out. The field becomes stiffer, making it harder to run on.

"There's a big difference now. It's a lot softer, a lot greener and easier to run and cut on," Hill said. "I don't think it was really bad before, but it was time to get a new turf."

In addition to the football team, the soccer and field hockey teams will also benefit from the new turf.

"Our old turf had a warranty of 10 years, and it was up for schedule anyway," Shelton said. "We expect the new turf to last for that long, hopefully even longer."

Alongside the new courts and new turf, the pool has received a major facelift.

The construction of the pool began over the summer when there was a leak in one of the pipes. The girls swimming team was forced to train for their season elsewhere. Driving from pool to pool is not how sophomore Angelina Cavaliere envisioned the start of her swim season.

"It took me a lot more time to get to my practices at Lochmoor, Yacht Club or Brownell as opposed to swimming at North," Cavaliere said.

Besides the travel, getting acclimated to a familiar setting was an issue.

"It usually takes about three practices to get used to a new pool," sophomore Angelina Cavaliere said. When she heard of the news that the pool was done, Cavaliere was looking forward to swimming at North.

"I was really excited because we didn't have to swim outside as much, where it's really cold," Cavaliere said. Once the pool was complete, it was quicker for the girls to get to their practices and get accustomed to the pool for the first time.

"It was easier to swim in North's (pool) because I got used to it more. It felt normal to be swimming there again."

The turf, courts and pool are making their impression on not only the teams and students, but also the community. With these renovations to the facilities, North expects to draw more interest and awareness to each sport and bring out more fans to each event.

"We hope our teams can focus more on their season and not have to worry about the field or place where they play on," Shelton said.