



Turner to Lead Cougars

By: Dan Callahan, Staff Writer, The Southwest Times

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PULASKI – One era ends another begins.

Jack Turner will replace retiring Joel Hicks as head football coach at Pulaski County High School. The Pulaski County School Board accepted superintendent Dr. Donald Stowers' recommendation of Turner during a meeting at Northwood School Tuesday afternoon at approximately 4:30 p.m.

"This is a big day for me," said Turner. "There's a thousand things going through my mind right now. I'm already beginning to learn that the head coach has a lot of things to be concerned about other than just coaching, but I am humbled by the opportunity. I'm thrilled and thankful that Dr. Stowers, Mr. Hale (PCHS principal), and the school board feel I was the person for the job."

Turner graduated from PCHS in 1985. He was an all state defensive end as a senior and led his team to the state semi-final, the high water mark of the program at that time. He graduated from Ferrum College in 1990 and was a graduate assistant at Ferrum through 1991. He then became a member of the coaching staff and faculty at Franklin County High School in 1992, and he came home to Pulaski County as a member of the Cougar staff in 1996.

The opportunity he has now is the one he always dreamed about. "This fulfills my dream. I remember as a player walking down those steps into Dobson Stadium. It was the thrill of my life as a player. Then I was always hoping I could get the chance to come home and be on the coaching staff. I never really thought about being the head coach because I wanted Coach Hicks to coach forever. But now to be the head coach at Pulaski County fulfills my dream. This has always been my dream job. I am blessed," said Turner.

How does it feel to be the man that replaces Joel Hicks who won over 300 games in his coaching career and over 200 in just 24 seasons at Pulaski County?

"First of all, nobody will ever replace coach Hicks and that includes me. I just hope I can keep what he built going. Everything I think about football and all that goes with it is because of what he taught me. If I am to be a successful head coach it's because Joel Hicks made me that. When I played for the Cougars, I thought he was the best coach in the world. When I got to come back home and coach on his staff, I thought he was the best coach in the world. I still feel that way today, " said Turner.

Turner also realizes how important it will be to keep the current Cougar staff together.

"Keeping our staff together is the absolute most important thing, not me being the head coach. Without the rest of the guys, I'm nothing. At the top of my list of things to do is get our staff together. We have some fine coaches. I need Rodney Landreth. I also need Scott Vest, Mike Cole, Perry Reese, Randy Dunnigan, Doug Dunavant, Drew Layne, Eric Berry and Mr. (Ken) Dobson. I must have these guys. This is the family and we must keep it together."

But Turner says there will be at least one addition to the 2003 Pulaski County coaching staff.

"We will replace Dan Newell (new GW-Danville head coach). We will probably need to hire somebody to coach the secondary. I will begin immediately to try and find the right guy. If there are any other promotions or staff movement, I would like to try and do that from within. Coach Hicks told me a long time ago, if I ever got to be a head coach, always try to promote from within first if you can, and if at all possible, I will always put the staff we have now first."

Turner says his coaching philosophy is really simple, and it's one he learned from Hicks as well.

"Pulaski County will work hard. Pulaski County will play hard. We'll go from there, but I know this. If you do those two things, work hard and play hard, good things will happen and my next dream is to see good things happen for the Cougar football program. I am excited, and honored to be the head football coach at Pulaski County", added Turner.