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Matta out after 13 years as Buckeye head basketball coach

The 13-year reign of Hoopeston son Thad Matta as Ohio State's head basketball coach is over.

At a press conference Monday, athletic director Gene Smith, with Matta seated next to him, announced that the Buckeye program is in search of a new leader.

The winningest coach in Buckeye basketball history had hit a rough patch the past couple of years: on the hardwood, (17-15 last season), in his health and in recruiting efforts - where negative recruiting by other teams, including rumors of Matta's imminent death - caused potential players to sign elsewhere.

Matta was sometimes tearful, sometimes philosophical, sometimes cracking jokes but always humble during Monday's announcement. Calling the past 13 years "the best of my life," Matta thanked Smith for his support over the years, the coaches who served under him, doctors who helped him continue to coach and the players. "We had some good ones," he said.

Smith said he made the decision after a meeting with Matta on Friday, where the men discussed the basketball program and Matta's role in it. Saying there was nothing leading up to Monday's meeting, talking to Matta on Monday, Smith said "it happened in the moment" and he felt "it was time" for a leadership change to "get our program back to where (Matta) built it."

Asked if his health contributed to less success recently, Matta said coaching exacerbated his back problems but



Photo/Ohio State University Athletics
Thad Matta at Monday's press conference.

refused to use his condition as a crutch. "We had our heyday when I was in this situation," he said.

Matta said he has had four major back surgeries in his life, the first at age 15. A surgery in June 2007 left him with no feeling in his right foot, chronic back pain and balance problems. Afterwards, he spent a year not being able to walk or take off his shoes.

Asked if he thought he would still be the coach if his health were better, he replied "Yeah, probably."

Known as a "hopalong guy" before he came to Ohio State,

Matta said he was known for going from place to place but that he and his family put down roots in the Ohio State community. To help that community, he offered to help the team and his successor...maybe. "Let me get this straight. If the guy comes in and does great, I was involved. If he doesn't, I had nothing to do with it," he said, a smile on his face.

Asked about another coaching job, "never say never," Matta said, but stressed his focus now is "to try to get healthy...just trying to get my body to where I can be serviceable."

Matta told himself "today does not define who I am" as he mentally reviewed his successes, which include two Final Four appearances in 2007 and 2012, three NCAA Elite Eight appearances and five Sweet 26 trips, 10 NBA draft picks, and a record 337 Buckeye wins, 216 at home,

See MATTA on other side

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Passage You Can't Miss with Tom Sweeney
 Monday, June 12, from 6-7:30 p.m. Class fee \$12

ASL - Baby Sign Language
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Dad! Whatta guy!

By BERTHA PARSONS

We would like to believe what we teach our kids, the stuff we show them how to do, makes the biggest difference in their lives.

The world tells us that their education is the most important thing we can devote our life to in order for them to succeed.

While it is true each person needs to grow up mastering certain skills, like how to operate a lawn mower, paint a house, clean a gutter, repair a faucet, change a flat tire, open a savings account, balance a checkbook to name a few. What they learn will make their life a little better.

However, the real great gift Dads give is showing how to live. It's the many things he does every day that shows he cares for everyone in his family, the community and this great country. It is stuff that is seen, not done, that makes a lasting impression. It's showing the Mother of his children that she is special by dishing out a hug in front of the kids. It's leaving a busy work schedule to attend a game or a concert. It's taking time to attend the Memorial Day and Veteran's Day observances to stand and proudly salute as the flag passes by. It's pitching in to mow the neighbor's lawn or carry in a hot meal when they are ailing. These and many other actions are observed by kids and the efforts will be seen and duplicated for years to come.

Dads teach responsibility for your actions, showing kindness and standing up for others even if it hurts. Dads teach the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Dads remind us to remember that life may not always be easy but you can make it good and worthwhile.

Yes, Dad gives advice and encouragement, shares your success and happiness and grieves with you in your set-backs. His love you never outgrow. Dad! Whatta guy!

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Court Dispositions

April 6

Nichole Hansen, Hoopeston, status check May 4.

David T. Cannon, Hoopeston, fined \$230 for theft.

Michael J. Cox, Hoopeston, fined \$280 for alcoholic containers prohibited.

Tonya Edwards, Hoopeston, fined \$580 for general nuisance; abatement order to be issued.

Sandra Woods, Hoopeston, status check May 4.

April Minard, Hoopeston, criminal damage to property case dismissed.

Robert Ferrell, disorderly conduct case dismissed.

May 4

Sean Hoover, pleaded guilty to two counts of general

Fire Calls

Hoopeston Fire Department was called at 3:45 p.m. Monday to a fire on Rt. 9 west of CVS after a cigarette lit dry brush.

Firemen were called at 9:15 p.m. Monday to a brush fire at Rt. 9 and 990 East Rd.

Matta continued from other side

ranking them #1 nationally since 2005.

It also includes helping a string of players do better not just on the court, but also in life. A 20 percent graduation rate among players when he started in 2004-05, is currently at 88 percent, he said.

Despite an impressive scorecard, Matta hopes his legacy focuses on something else. "I hope I'm remembered as a really good person who cared about the university, a guy who cared about the players," as well as "we always did it the right way."

Matta still has three years left on a six-year contract, worth more than \$3.2 million annually. Signed in 2013, the deal extends until July 2019. Smith said the contract will be honored and that the details of the buyout are being worked out.

A nationwide search for Matta's replacement is underway.

Weather

Sunny today. High 78. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 57. Tomorrow, partly sunny. High 81, low 60.

nuisance; status hearing June 1.

Tonya Edwards, Hoopeston, failed to appear, found guilty by default; sentencing June 1.

Matthew Minard, Milford, failed to appear, found guilty by default; sentencing June 1.

Steven Menschel, Hoopeston, failed to appear, found guilty by default; sentencing June 1.

James Cox, Hoopeston, pleaded not guilty to restraint of dogs by owner or keeper; trial June 1.

James Cox, Hoopeston, pleaded not guilty to criminal damage to property; trial June 1.

Obituaries

FOUSE - Maria Louise (Torres) Fouse, 74, of Hoopeston, died at 6:30 p.m. Friday, June 2, 2017 at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Visitation will be 4-6 p.m. Wednesday at Anderson Funeral Home, Hoopeston. Funeral will be at 11 a.m. Thursday at the funeral. Burial will follow in Floral Hill Cemetery, Hoopeston. Memorials are suggested to Disabled American Veterans, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati OH 45250-0301.

Classifieds

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Hoopeston: Cozy 2 Bedroom, 1 Bath. Recently painted, well-maintained. Refrigerator, stove, full basement. Walk to shopping. Nice yard. Quiet area. Handicap accessible. Nonsmoking, no pets. References checked. Available June 1. \$485/mo, \$485 dep. Call or text 217-260-8762.

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