

UPDATED: Post Replaces Bowne At St. Stephens

Written by Mike Kelly

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For the second time in a week, a Watauga High graduate has been named a head coach in Catawba County.

Last week, Fred T. Foard named Jason Phelps its new football coach. Phelps graduated from WHS in 1992, and from Appalachian State University in 1996. Now, Murphy Post, who graduated from WHS in 2003 and ASU in 2007, has been named the new men's basketball coach at St. Stephens. He replaces Gary Bowne, who retired last week.

"I was a manager at ASU for three years under coach (Houston) Fancher," he said. "And I just fell in love with the game. I've always been a sports fan, and I love basketball. I had zero agility to play the game at a high level, but I learned a lot being around people like coach Fancher, coach (Matt) McMahon and coach Bowne."

Bowne was the longest tenured coach in the greater Hickory area. He spent 34 years as a basketball coach, the last 21 at St. Stephens where he won 277 games. His teams were 90-46 the last five seasons.

"We have a lot of talent in the program," Post said. "A lot of these young guys didn't get to play last year because we were so senior dominated. But we have a lot of very good underclassmen. Coach Bowne left the program in great shape. It will be an adjustment, but I feel in the long run we have the talent to be very good."

Post, who has been with the program for the last four years, inherits a team that was 21-7 last season, but lost seven seniors to graduation. Post, a social studies teacher, has been the JV coach and a varsity assistant during his four-year stay. That alone made the choice of naming him Bowne's successor.

"Murphy exudes a contagious enthusiasm and youthful exuberance for the game, and he has a great rapport with his players," said St. Stephens Assistant Principal and Athletics Director Dennis Whitener.

Post is the son of retired Boone Police Chief Bill Post. He was involved in theater in high school, but basketball eventually caught his eye in college. And growing up right across the street from the Bowne family aided the process.

"Davis (Bowne, who played at ASU) was my best friend growing up," Post said. "I've known the Bowne family since I was five years old. And I learned a lot from Gary. He's the best coach in the area. He taught me how to handle a team, a staff and the dynamics of the game. Things really worked out for me, and prepared me for this moment."

The Pioneers play St. Stephens on the road January 17; the Indians come to Boone on February 10.

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