

## Allan Eager To Turn Things Around

Written by Mike Kelly

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Todd Allan isn't one to sit idly by. No, the Wooster, Ohio native, who was named the new wrestling coach at Watauga High on Monday night, has always been one to go the extra mile,

and one to defy the odds. And a lot of that credit goes to his father, Tom, who was his coach for many years growing up.

"My dad was, without question, the guy that really got me started in this stuff," Allan said. "He coached me in little league and in high school. He was my football and wrestling coach in high school. I really enjoyed playing for him, and I really learned a lot."

And Allan, who has been well traveled, has enjoyed a lot of success following in his father's footsteps. And he found most of that success coaching football. Allan, who was a football player and a wrestler for his father at Wooster High School, played college football and won two Division II national championships at the University of Findlay in Findlay, OH.

"I didn't want to wrestle in college," he said. "I got a little burned out on it. Plus, I was a football guy. I love the game, and I really wanted to coach football when I was done playing."

And he got his chance coaching both football and wrestling at Nederland Middle Senior High School in Boulder County, CO, for three years. He also spent two years as an assistant football coach at Maine Maritime Academy, a Division III school in Castine, ME; and he also spent time coaching in the state of Montana near the Canadian border.

"Man, I loved it up there," he said. "I'm an outdoor guy, and I love snowboarding. But I've been to a lot of places in such a short time. My wife and I finally decided to move back this way to move near family."

His wife has family in Ohio, and Allan's family is nestled in North Carolina. As a matter of fact, his dad is still coaching today. He helps out as a volunteer coach at Southern Alamance High School in Graham, NC.

"My dad has been coaching his entire life," Allan said. "He's in his mid-60's and still going strong. And I love to coach, too."

But coaching football got to be a little monotonous. And suddenly, the sport he greatly loved started becoming a job.

"I was getting a little burned out coaching football at the collegiate level," he said. "I mean you're dealing with 12 hour days for a period of eight-to-nine months. I was losing my passion and desire for it. That's when I decided to go back into high-school coaching."

"And I love working with kids. The main thing for me is to treat everyone fairly. That's the way my father was. I don't care what your background is. All I want is a commitment and a strong work ethic. If we can accomplish that, we'll get along just fine."

But Allan is inheriting a WHS program that has lost its glory from past years. And since Brian Oliver (current principal at Hibriten) left after the 2000 season, a once-proud program has fallen on hard times. But despite the odds, Allan is anxious to get things turned around.

"It's something I learned from my dad," he said. "Nothing is hopeless. It's just a matter of

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pumping confidence back into the kids. It's something I really enjoy doing. I love motivating kids, I love teaching, and I love instilling a positive attitude in them. That's the way my dad did it for years, and it's worked for me."

Allan made that discovery during his stay in Colorado. He turned a dormant program around in just a short while.

"When I got there, no one really cared about football or wrestling," he said. "But we got it turned around. And it got to the point where I was producing at least two state qualifiers in wrestling every year. One thing I can say is that I've been successful wherever I've been. I've been blessed that way."

Now, Allan, who is a self-employed painter, does not have a teaching degree. He has a degree in criminal justice. And while he won't be on staff at WHS, he hopes to one day become a teacher.

"It's something I hope to do one day," he said. "I really want to teach, but for now, I'm content with where I am. I've had a lot of opportunities to coach, and my wife even says I'm a better person when I'm coaching. It's in my nature to help kids. Plus, I have two children of my own (his little girls is in the fourth grade, and his little boy is five), and I really want them, especially my son, around athletics. I really hope my boy wants to wrestle someday, but I won't force him into it."

And Allan is ready to face his current challenge---resurrecting a dormant program and returning it to its winning ways.

"It won't be easy, but the big thing is restoring an interest in the program," Allan said. "It's going to take time. But I have the time to give. The winter time is usually a slow time for me, painting-wise. So, I have the time to dedicate myself to the kids and this program. We'll just work hard at it and see where it goes."