

Dec. 20 Baseball

Hornet grad Pienciak takes over as head man for the Hamilton varsity

By Rich Fisher

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Dec. 20: Mark Pienciak feels he's ready to be the new Hamilton West boys' baseball coach.

And so does the man he's replacing.

"He has to be ready, he doesn't have a choice now," said John Costantino, who gave up the position when he became Steinert's Athletic Director in October. "But I think he's ready. He's going to be a great young coach.

"He's very conscientious, he works well with the players and he's a teacher of the game. He's very good at teaching the finer aspects of the game, which is hard to find in young coaches."

Like Costantino, Pienciak is taking over at the school he played for. It became official when he was approved by the Board of Education at Monday night's meeting.

A 2001 graduate, Pienciak played for West's 2000 Central Jersey Group III championship team. He went on to Mercer County Community College and The College of New Jersey and returned to his alma mater in 2005 as a Health and Physical education teacher.

That spring, he became an assistant coach for Costantino, working mainly with pitchers, and remained there ever since. He also spent two years as a sub-varsity head coach, and was an assistant at Broad Street Park for eight years before taking a sabbatical last summer.

"I think I'm definitely prepared and ready for this," Pienciak said. "I have a lot of experience. I was with Johnny all six years he was there, and for two years was with the sub varsity so I got an opportunity to run my own team."

Pienciak has worked with, and for, a litany of coaches that comprise a partial Who's Who of Mercer County baseball men. They include Dave Gallagher, Sonny Pittaro, Randy Voorhees, Rick Dell, Jimmy Maher, Chuck Giambelluca and Tinker Johnson.

"I got to pick their brains," Pienciak said. "I always took the opportunities to learn what they're thinking."

The fact he is taking over at his former school is a bonus.

"Being a head coach has always been a long-range goal," Pienciak said. "For me, if it could be at Hamilton West it would have been my number one choice. I'd love to be a head coach at any program, but the fact it's at my alma mater is something special."

He plans on returning to help out at Broad Street Park this summer as well. Last year he took time off to get his house ready for to move into after he gets married next year.

"I took a hiatus, but now being in charge of the program, I'm gonna have an involvement with Broad Street," he said. "That's what you need to do. It's a 12-month a year responsibility. You like to see they're doing what they're supposed to when they're not playing for Hamilton."