

On campus today

SPORTS AT NMU

By Cindy Paavola '84 BS

Chris Ostrowsky was promoted to head coach of the Northern Michigan University football team in late November after the contract of six-year coach **Bernie Anderson 79 BS, '89 MAE** was not renewed. Ostrowsky had been the Wildcats' offensive coordinator for the past two seasons. He came to NMU with 15 years of coaching experience, which included three seasons (2007-10) as an assistant at NCAA Division I Northeastern University in Boston, where he was the quarterbacks coach and passing game coordinator, as well as the program's recruiting coordinator. His other coaching stops included Widener University (2005-07), Washington and Lee University (2002-04) and at Newark, N.J.'s East Side High School (1997-01). He played quarterback at Roselle Park High School and Jersey City State College, graduating with a history degree in 1993.

What does it mean to you to be named NMU's head football coach?

It means so much to me and my family on so many different levels. We've sacrificed a lot, as all coaches and their families do, to be in the football coaching business, and this is certainly the realization of a goal. I think there is so much potential for Northern football and I'm honored and thrilled to be given the chance to bring the program back to the same level of national prominence it enjoyed in the past.

Since being named head coach, what have been your primary activities?

The remaining NMU coaches and I have been concentrating on three



Tim Rossland

Passion and consistency

Five questions for NMU's new football coach

phases. Phase one is recruiting. We want to physically be in as many schools talking to the best talent and their coaches as is humanly possible. I want to go where Northern hasn't gone before, and I think there is a lot of potential to do that. For instance, I already have very strong relationships with the high school programs in New Jersey, a state where there are no Division II programs. So, that area could be very fertile ground for us. Phase two: recruiting visits. January through to signing day is all about providing the best recruiting visits for prospective players and their parents so that they really get to know what a great university Northern is, and get to know Wildcat football. Phase three is to finish hiring the rest of the coaching staff, which I think I'll have done by

middle to late February. All three phases are moving along very successfully.

What are you looking for in an NMU football player? What makes a great Wildcat recruit?

I want guys who were their high school team captains. I want guys who know how to sacrifice, know how to lead, who take the privilege and responsibility of being part of a team seriously. Obviously, we're looking for talented football players, and I'm confident we can find them and bring them to Northern. Players joining our program need to be academically as sound as possible. It's counterproductive to bring in strong football players who are poor students because they won't be here long. We're going to look at each young man and ask the

questions, “What kind of character does he have? How has he lived his life?” We’ll check his background diligently to find out things like school attendance. If he didn’t bother to go to class in high school, he simply doesn’t have the right stuff to be a part of the NMU football program. We want leaders who are work horses, who believe that winning takes sacrifice—because it does. It will never just happen.

Who is Chris Ostrowsky, especially away from football?

First and most important, I’m a father. My kids—Jackson (11), Joseph (9) and Hope (2)—are everything to me. No matter what happens during the day or at a game, when I go home and see my three great kids, that’s my world. I’m a husband. I treasure the love of my life, my wife Jennifer. I’m a son. I was very close to my late father and still consider him one of my best friends. And my mom’s my mom—nobody tops Mom. I’m a brother who can’t say enough

about the support of his brother and sister. I’m a friend and I feel so lucky to have amazing friends who keep me grounded. I guess if I had to describe myself, whether you’re talking about me on the field or off, I’d use three words: energy, passion and intensity. On the field, I might be a little more intense than off, but I’m pretty much the same guy when I’m at work or home. I don’t do things halfway. I love my family and friends. I love coaching football—I love every stage of the game. I’m just the kind of guy who is really passionate and doesn’t take one day for granted.

What are your long-term goals for NMU football?

I want Northern Michigan University football to re-establish itself as a nationally recognized brand. We’re going to be a program that is in the hunt for conference championships and NCAA playoff berths consistently. I truly believe that. The NMU athletic

facilities are amazing, first-class and comparable to many Division I programs. We have a great university with great academic programs. We have community support. The alumni base here is extraordinary, not just with former players who have stayed in different areas of the game, but successful alumni in all kinds of professional fields.

So, the ultimate goal is success on a consistent and national level. To get to that point, we’re going to attack each part of the season with passion, energy and commitment—that’s winter conditioning, spring ball, pre-season training and then every game of the season and playoffs. Our work ethic will be consistent and it will be intense. We’re also going to have an expectation of playing together as a team—nothing else will be acceptable. The goal is to have a football program that makes everyone extremely proud to be Wildcats.



Godfrey steps down as athletic director

Ken Godfrey '87 MAE, Northern Michigan University’s special assistant to the president/athletic director, is stepping down from the athletic director portion of his position.

Godfrey, who came to NMU in 1979 as a member of the recreational sports staff and who has been the Wildcat AD since June 2003, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia in the fall of 2010 and has been on medical leave since that time.

A search for a new athletic director is now under way. The tentative timeline is to have a new AD announced by May 1 with a start date soon after.

“My hope is to return to NMU when I am once again healthy, but not as AD. It is in the best interest of the department and the university at this time to get a permanent athletic director in place who can continue to move Wildcat athletics forward,” Godfrey says.

Hockey and Track in National Ratings

Although bouncing around the middle of the pack in the Central Collegiate Hockey Association standings this year, Northern’s hockey team has consistently stayed in the top 15 in the national pairwise ratings that will determine the NCAA Tournament participants. In fact, at press time, the Wildcats were tied for sixth in the ratings.

The Wildcat indoor track and field team has enjoyed a Top 25 spot in each of the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association national team computer rankings this season. As of press time, the ‘Cats were No. 21.

Wildcat fans can get all the latest results, rankings, news, live Internet radio and video broadcasts and the upcoming schedule at www.nmu.edu/athletics.