

**Nate Smith - Fruitport's New Football Coach**

Larry J. Pellet



Talk about a winning resume. It appears Fruitport has found it's new man in recently hired head coach, Nate Smith. Picked from a reported group of 22 candidates, the 45 year old Jenison native, married for 25 years and proud papa of 3 successful children, says he has a vision and is already implementing it with his players.

Picked as the MHSFCA Assistant Coach of the year in 2014 while at Grand Haven, Smith saw an opportunity to transfer to Muskegon Catholic Central where he was part of a 22-2 record, including Div 8 State Champs in 2016.

But, being a head coach was always his dream... esp with the "tradition, work ethic, grit and image" that Fruitport had, he said. He also appreciates the Trojan administration that likes football. "I see it as a great fit", then added, "I want Fruitport to see it as a great fit, also".

Athletic Director Ken Erny agrees. "He's a great guy...and getting acclimated well".

Coach Smith, who also doubles as General Manager for the Muskegon Ironmen, instills in his players integrity, intensity, increase, intention and investment. He preaches "win from within" and proclaims that will reflect on the scoreboard. Players, even down to the middle school, are required to be mentally prepared as well as physically, as evidenced in their 6am weightlifting workouts.

"I want to change the culture", Smith stated. A licensed preacher, he tells the kids that greatness is inside each of them, and the discipline he teaches is about life, being driven and being in it for the long run.

As for his coaching strategy, the former wrestling coach says he plans on using the "Power Spread" and "Wing T" type offense, but that it will look different each week and tailored around his players. He sites key leaders on his team as Wes Iillum, Jakob Carlise, Ethan Flores, David Cadina and Crue Cooper.

With a vision like that, it's hard not to like the cordial Smith, who drove out of his way for this interview. Nor is it hard to get excited about what he brings to Fruitport's table.

"Success breed success", he reflected. And hopes are high again in Trojan nation.

Never mind that this guy favors the Ohio State Buckeyes and the New York Yankees - really. Fruitport can let that slide!

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