



The Huntsville Times

Stapler not nearly done with hoops

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Retired coach prepares to mold area youth at his new academy

Ronnie Stapler considered retiring shortly after the new year began, but had a change of heart.

He told Guntersville High School officials he would return for one more year, but then a family issue prompted him to move ahead with his initial decision.

Stapler, who won more than 600 games during an illustrious 39-year career at Grissom and Guntersville, including two state championships, a state runner-up and six Final Four appearances, retired last month. It was short-lived.

Stapler is coming out of retirement Monday when he opens the Alabama Basketball Academy inside the D1 Sports Training Facility off Bailey Cove Road.

"This is something I've always wanted to do," said Stapler while installing the floor inside the facility. "I love working with kids and this will give me an opportunity to continue to do that."

Stapler will work with first-graders through high school seniors, and personal training is also available. Stapler is also available to work with individual teams as well.

"We're going to do a lot of skill development and have camps and clinics," he said. "I can do this and still be available to help kids and keep my hand in the game."

Corey Remillard, who serves as facility coordinator at the Huntsville location, said D1 Sports couldn't have gotten a better person to head up its basketball academy.

"Coach Stapler is one of the most respected basketball coaches in this state and we're thrilled to have him as a part of our organization," Remillard said. "He did a tremendous job at Grissom and Guntersville, and we know he'll do a great job for us. Parents who want to see their kids improve should bring them here and let Coach Stapler train them."

Stapler is thankful to D1 for allowing him to do it.

"If you look at all the people that do this, these people do it better than anybody," he said. "It's a first-class organization and the location is unbelievable. To have a chance to work with this clientele and have a nice facility and a great location was a no-brainer."

Being involved in a venture like this, Stapler said, is a dream come true.

"I've always wanted to do this," he said. "Scott (Stapler's son) and I have talked about this for a long time. We talked about him coming back to Huntsville and opening up a facility and doing this full-time and this

afforded me an opportunity to do that and, hopefully, someday he can get involved in it, too."

Stapler is anxious to get started.

"Our motto is fundamentals and sweat," he said. "If you don't like to be taught fundamentals and you don't like to sweat, you don't need to come here.

"We're going to teach fundamentals and we're going to sweat."

The summer training program will run from Monday through July 31. Stapler can be reached at 658-2416 or 880-1717.

Summer Training Programs

*8 sessions - 1 hour each - \$300

*12 sessions - 1 hour each - \$400

*18 sessions - 1 hour each - \$500

*Personal training - 1 hour each session - \$330 (6 sessions @ \$55)

*Rental rates - Half-court \$50 per hour; full-court \$100 per hour

*Coach Stapler work with a team - \$125 hour

*Family rate reduced by 10 percent for second child

*Team rate (5 or more from one team for skill development) reduced by 10 percent

*Limit 12 per class

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