

Lohse resigns LHS baseball post



Jeff Lohse speaks with his team before their regional semifinal game on May 18 in Spring Hill. Following the game, Lohse told his team that he had resigned after 17 years as the Wildcat head coach.

For the last 17 years, the end of the baseball season always found Jeff Lohse on a bus heading back to Louisburg.

Whether it was after a state tournament, or a regional championship game, it was always a difficult ride back home. However, No. 17 was the most excruciating of all.

When the Wildcats returned home on May 18, Lohse informed his team that he would not be returning for an 18th season as the Louisburg head coach after he officially resigned to Louisburg High School administration days earlier.

“I was dreading that day to be honest,” Lohse said. “The whole bus ride back from Spring Hill I just had an ache in my stomach and as we got closer to Louisburg it just kept getting worse. Telling them was very tough and a lot harder than I anticipated. I don’t know if they were in disbelief or what, but it was a pretty quiet and somber locker room and it was very emotional.”

It was an emotional decision that had been on Lohse's mind for the last year. He made up his mind in January but didn't want anyone to know before the season started and he didn't want any distractions.

The reason for the decision was simple – he wanted to spend more time with his family – including his two children Trevin and McKenna.

“It was a tough decision and one that I have thought about for a while,” Lohse said. “It wasn't one of those decisions where I thought about it overnight and then snap, this is what I am going to do. I really put some serious thought into it. I pretty much made up my mind in January, but I didn't want people to know.

“The overall decision was basically because I needed to be there for my kids more. Trevin and McKenna are getting involved in more activities and I need to be there for them and enjoy it.”

Not that he didn't enjoy his job. Louisburg baseball has been a big part of Lohse's life.

Lohse played on the varsity level for four years while in Louisburg High School, before returning to his alma mater to coach for 17 years following college. He is also a member of the LHS Athletic Hall of Fame.

It is that dedication to the program that will make Lohse difficult to replace.

“I would like to thank coach Lohse for his dedication to the LHS baseball program,” Louisburg High School activities director Darin Gagnebin said. “To be a head coach at one place for 17 years says a lot about Jeff not only as a coach but as a person. He is a home grown Louisburg kid, who had opportunities to go elsewhere and chose to come back and make Louisburg his home, to raise his family here and to give back

to his community by not only coaching, but teaching as well.”

Lohse kept Louisburg baseball relevant as he took the Wildcats to two state tournament appearances and finished his time as the Wildcats skipper with a 184-163 record. His 17 years made him the Frontier League’s longest tenured head coach.

“I just want to thank my current and former players and all my assistant coaches for being there for me and for the administration for always being so supportive,” Lohse said. “This is my decision and I always knew that if I was going to get out that I was going to do it on my own terms and I didn’t want someone telling me that it was my time to leave.”

Lohse made several memories during his time at Louisburg, whether it was taking a team to the state tournament his first season, finishing a regional championship game at Lewis-Young Park against Fort Scott at 1 a.m., beating the top three seeds to go to state in 2009 or this year’s team that doubled its win total from a season ago.

“These group of kids this year were great to go from five to 10 wins was a great accomplishment,” Lohse said. “There have been a lot more positive memories than negative ones.”

Lohse’s fondest moment might be the way his teams took the field and represented themselves.

“Something I am proud about is that we as coaches taught the kids to play the game the right way,” Lohse said. “I think we accomplished that for the most part and that our players respected the game.”