

CHS wrestling, hoops add experienced leaders

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

There are a couple Veitches in the wrestling room now at Caledonia High School and a few more on the way.

Shawn Veitch, the Dutton Elementary principal, has returned to lead the Caledonia varsity wrestling team this season after a decade away from the program. Veitch

formerly coached the Fighting Scot program from the 2007-2008 season through the 2011-2012 season.

Now that he is settled in as an elementary school principal and has couple of sons working their way through the youth ranks in Caledonia he was ready to return and try to lift the program to championship form.



Shawn Veitch coaches the Caledonia varsity wrestling team during a dual in December of 2008. Veitch is returning to lead the Caledonia program after 11 years away from the corner. (File photo)



New Caledonia varsity wrestling coach Shawn Veitch.

His son Evan is in fourth grade and his son Ian is a second-grader.

"I am excited," Veitch said with his usual enthusiasm. "I want to build a championship program not just for them, but for our community."

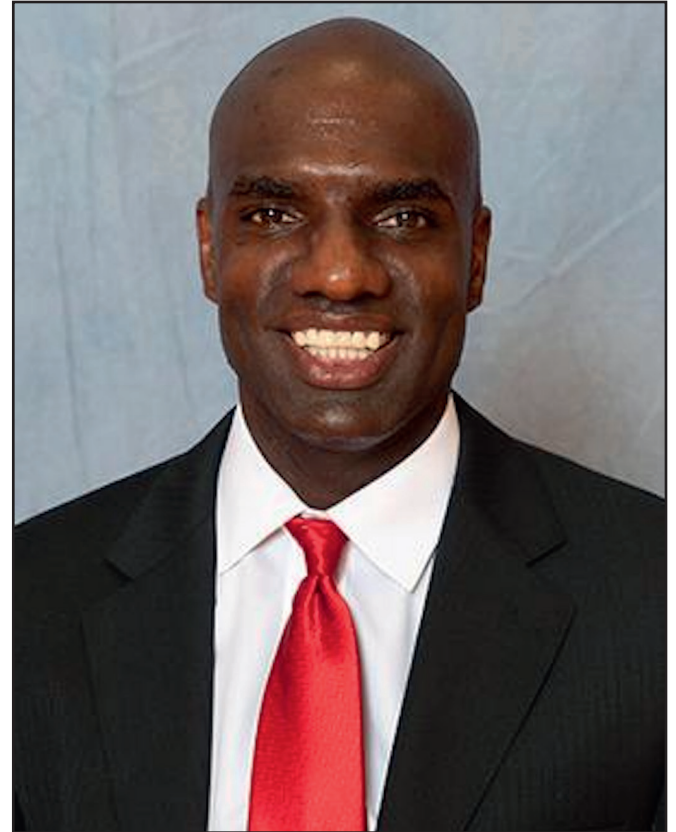
The wrestling community in the high school is already a little bigger than he'd anticipated. Veitch said there were 40 wrestlers taking part in conditioning the first week of the season, with a few football players getting a little time off to rest their bodies and minds. He had 48 wrestlers in the room for

practice Monday and was expecting to hit the 50 mark by the end of the week.

Veitch said 50 is the mark he would like the program to set as a minimum for numbers, with enough wrestlers for a JV, Varsity 'B' and Varsity squad. His goal was to have 25-30 wrestlers ready to go this winter.

Veitch was as part of a slew of head coaching additions made by the Caledonia High School athletic department last spring including Grace Will whose varsity volleyball team just reached the district finals of the state tournament in Division I and Amber Pearson who is at Eastern Michigan University this weekend with the state qualifying swimmers and divers from the Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian girls' co-op.

Lamar Chapman is the new lead man for the Caledonia varsity boys' basketball team which opened practice Monday too. Chapman has served as an assistant coach at various Division I schools including Northern Illinois University, Toledo, Central Michigan,



New Caledonia varsity boys' basketball coach Lamar Chapman.

Stony Brook University and Central Connecticut State.

Prior to working on the collegiate level, he coached Muskegon Heights to a state runner-up finish in 2003 and a state semifinal appearance in 2004. The Tigers were 42-9 during his two years at the lead.

Chapman takes over for Phil Visser who led the Fighting Scot program for the past eight seasons.

Roger Singleton took over head coaching duties when Veitch left the CHS wrestling program after the 2011-2012 season and guided the Scots through their transition into the OK Red Conference. The "new" Fighting Scot head coach said coach Singleton has been very helpful in his transition back into the corner.

Singleton isn't the only helpful coach around. Veitch said he is able to get out of his duties as principal early on Monday afternoons in time for the high school practice, but he has been getting help getting things rolling the other days of the week from his father, Bob Veitch.

"He has been able to come over and volunteer every day at practice with that common voice and that common system I'll be teaching," Shawn said of his dad who is third all-time in dual meet victories by a coach in MHSAA history and a member of the Michigan and National Wrestling Hall of Fames.

Shawn took the program over last spring and ran a three-day summer camp for all levels of the program from kindergarten to high school.

"That was awesome to see the verticality of Caledonia wrestling which I am trying to instill. We're all a family - not youth, middle school and high school. It is Cal wrestling, all of us."

"It was fun to see the high school kids interacting with the youth. It was a really cool three days. We had a couple other summer camps there and a couple other open mat nights that our club ran here in the fall."

The Fighting Scots have a scrimmage at Lakewood on the schedule for early December and will open the season with a quad at home Dec. 6.

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- Popcorn!
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9809 CHERRY VALLEY AVE. SE, SUITE C, CALEDONIA MI

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