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## Coach Focuses On Attitude, Concentration, Effort

JUNE 20TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

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*By Annabeth Miller,  
ShowMe Times Editor*

She hadn't been on the coaching roster a full 24 hours, and Carmen Morgan was on the court at the Bearcat Event Center, meeting her players and looking forward to the fall volleyball season.

The Dexter Board of Education on Tuesday hired Morgan as the new head volleyball coach at Dexter High School. She was on hand Wednesday morning, as players participated in gym time at the BEC. The informal practice time gave Morgan a chance to meet her players – and for the players to meet the new coach.

Coming to DHS with a wealth of experiences and a deep appreciation for the game, Morgan is looking forward to the upcoming season. She arrives in Dexter after a successful coaching career at Clearwater, where she led the Tigers volleyball squad to seven district championships and four state titles. She says she has a genuine enthusiasm for the sport – and it shows.

"I love volleyball; I love coaching. It's my passion and always has been," Morgan said after meeting her varsity players Wednesday morning. She coached at Clearwater near Piedmont for years, then entered the administrative side at the school as assistant principal and A+ coordinator. She retired all last school year – spending time at home and with six grandchildren. "It never leaves you. I love it; I love to teach the game – the mental and physical parts of the game. It's in my blood."

She commented that when teaching or coaching is your passion, it's hard to give it up.

Morgan is impressed with the facilities in the Dexter school system – the BEC and the entire school district campus. And she hopes the students appreciate the quality of the facilities offered in the local school.

"Is there a more beautiful facility anywhere," she asked rhetorically. "This is unbelievable! The whole campus is wonderful. These kids are so lucky to have this; I hope they realize that."

Morgan met with both squads on Wednesday, and was impressed with the number of players who were able to attend the open gym time.

"From what I see there's talent here. But we all know it takes a lot more than talent to have a good team," she said.

Morgan said there were three basic ingredients she stressed in working with teams: *Attitude. Concentration. Effort.*

"I told they can remember that as ACE," she added. "In volleyball there is so much that is mental in the game. So you can teach the game, you can teach the strategy in the game, you can teach the fundamentals. "

But as a coach, Morgan said you have to work on these three basic aspects of the game.

"You always want to have a close-knit team, and you don't need drama on a team. You need a team working together. So that's important," she explained.

Therefore, she said she will work to help the girls become a close unit, and to work on becoming mentally tough on the court come game time.

"You want to be tougher mentally than the other team, so that our mental toughness will pull us through," she added.

Morgan said she also likes competition, and looks forward to the tough Stoddard County Conference.

"To me, competition is where we get to shine. Every game should be 'knock down-drag out' down to the last point. That's what competition is about. We get to go out and play and show what we can do. I like the fact that this is a tough conference," she said.

Volleyball is a family passion for Morgan. She coached the sport beginning in 1984 in Piedmont. Her husband's coached and her two daughters have coached - one at Bloomfield and the other at Cape Central. Now a new generation of the family is growing up with volleyball when the grandchildren take to the court.

"Family is important," she commented. "We're a sports-minded family; we're competitive. I don't care what it is - it could be Tiddlywinks - we're all trying to win!"

And Bearcat read-and-black is nothing new for the coach. She started her career donning the black and red of the Bearcats at Lesterville, and she said will probably end her career as a Dexter Bearcat.

Morgan conceded that summertime is also pre-season for volleyball, with the first matches soon after the school year begins in August. And that can be a bit tricky in working around family vacations and other activities the girls to which the girls are committed.

"I was really happy with the turnout we had today. The girls were out here; they worked hard. I expect lot from them. I just found out a long time ago that kids will rise to what you expect. So I have high expectations for them," she concluded.

She is enthusiastic about the girls, the upcoming season, and the sport. To her volleyball is an exciting sport - a unique game where there is a skill not found in other athletic competitions. You don't dribble a ball, you don't bounce the ball. The ball doesn't rest on a court or field. It is unique. You spend your time on the court keeping the ball in play and in the air.

"Volleyball is the only sport where the ball cannot hit the floor," the coach commented.

Good fact to remember heading into a new season.

***Photo Above: New DHS Volleyball Coach Carmen Morgan chats with player Madison Bishop following open gym time at the BEC on Wednesday. (ShowMe Times photo by Annabeth Miller)***

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