Supporters protest firing
West Bend East wrestling coach was fired last week

By SARAH MANN
Daily News Staff

Parents, students and athletes have rallied behind James Gundrum, a West Bend East High School wrestling coach who many said was unfairly let go from the school’s staff last week.

People packed into the room at the West Bend School Board’s regular meeting Monday evening carrying black-and-white signs proclaiming, “Bring back coach!” Though board members could not officially comment on the matter on why Gundrum is no longer on staff, an appeal of the matter may be coming. However, “The appeals process has not yet begun for any employee of the district at this point,” School Board President Randy Marquardt told the crowd.

Members of the public who stood up to voice their support for Gundrum had to do so in very broad terms.

“We are not hearing any personnel matters in open or closed session this evening,” Marquardt said. “At no time tonight can the name of a coach or a student be discussed.”

Speakers instead found creative ways to tell the board they wanted Gundrum back on staff.

“I do believe the person that I am speaking about – I won’t mention any names – he does very, very well at trying to keep the kids in line and making decent, productive citizens out of them,” said Mary Kaschner of Jackson. “The school would be very bad not to have him any longer.”

Dylan Kleczka, a West Bend East alumnus and a former wrestler, echoed Kaschner’s comments.

“I believe that the coach prepared me to be a productive citizen and taught me more than just a sport while I was on his team,” Kleczka said.

Scott Kirkendall, the vice president of sales at Broan-NuTone, had another reason for the board to give serious consideration to Gundrum’s position with the district: victory. Though he did not imply support or disapproval for Gundrum, he warned the board members that they should think about their athletics program going forward.

“There is intrinsic value in building winning athletic programs,” Kirkendall told the board. “The mediocrity that has evolved and is being tolerated with a number of East athletic programs puts me in an awkward and uncomfortable position when it comes to new hires at our company. As one of Washington County’s largest employers, I cannot ... encourage our people to pursue the West Bend East school system if they’re looking for competitive athletics to complement their educational experience.
“This is where we have the opportunity to make a difference with our coach selections,” he said.

Marquardt did not say when the appeals process would begin. The School Board does not have any other scheduled meetings until after the new year. Gundrum began coaching at West Bend East in 2010.

Sarah Mann/Daily News Staff
West Bend East High School students sit over their signs proclaiming support for East wrestling coach James Gundrum, who was let go from his position last week. Some students and parents claim that Gundrum was unfairly cut from his position and attended the West Bend School Board meeting Monday evening to voice their support for the coach.

WRESTLING

New East coach takes over hostile situation
Bill Ehn was Suns’ junior varsity coach

By PAT NEUMUTH
Daily News Staff

West Bend East’s new wrestling head Coach Bill Ehn has a passion for East wrestling. He was the junior varsity coach the past four years and was a wrestler from the program, graduating in 1992.

“I have a lot wrestling background on a personal level,” Ehn said. “It started with an opening in the newspaper five years ago. It gave me something to do to pass the winter months away.”

This is Ehn’s first time as a head varsity coach, but his assistant, Dave Uelmen, knows what it is like to be in that position.

Uelmen was the varsity coach prior to James Gundrum.

Gundrum’s contract was terminated last week after being the coach for two years. It is a change that has stirred up some anger from supporters of Gundrum, which included a protest...
at Monday’s School Board meeting.
“It’s a tough change for them,” Ehn said. “You never know what to expect, so you prepare and focus for their opponent and leave it out on the mat.”
However, Ehn said it’s not about who’s coaching the team. It’s about the 28 guys on the team putting in the time to become a team. And this team is young. For many, last year was their first year competing in wrestling at any level. Plus, there are no seniors on this year’s team to lead the way.
“It’s a constant of keeping them acclimated to wrestling,” Ehn said. “We’re moving forward and I think they are grasping onto it. We expect good things this year.”
The Suns’ strength will be from 106 to 145 pounds. In Ehn’s coaching debut Thursday, the Suns lost to Beaver Dam, 42-36, but East’s 106 through 145 all won their respective matches. Ehn said a majority of the team’s better wrestlers are at the lower weights, but the lower weight classes often are underclassmen, too.
“There’s still good guys above that, but they are less experienced,” Ehn said. “Once you get up to 152 and the upper weights, we are talking a little more mature juniors and seniors. You can get away with inexperience at the lower weights.”
East’s only state qualifier from last year was Jordan Gundrum, who wrestles at 145. The sophomore went to state last year at 126 pounds, where he won his first match, but lost his next two. Gundrum has already had a good season, winning the Gunslinger Invitational with a 6-0 record.
“I think he’ll be just fine,” Ehn said about Jordan Gundrum’s mindset following the coaching change. “His focus is wrestling and you could see that on the mat no matter what time or what place. He’s there to wrestle and win every match.”
Ehn thinks more than just Jordan Gundrum can make it to the individual state tournament this year.
Sophomores Gavin Forester and Turner Pruett took third place at the sectional, while junior Nathan Peterson was a sectional qualifier.
“Anybody can make it to state as long as they have the right attitude and work ethic,” Ehn said. “Our goal is to take this team and keep them a team and have them support each other, and move forward to make them the best possible wrestlers, people and all-around good students.”

ROUNDUP
Spartans undefeated at invite
Daily News Staff

West Bend West’s wrestling team dominated the inaugural Sheboygan North Duals Tournament on Saturday.
The Spartans went 5-0, beating Appleton West (70-3), Menasha (54-21), Sheboygan North (60-23), Mayville (75-4) and West Allis Hale (73-3). Eight wrestlers from West went undefeated:
Justin Lor (106 pounds), Jon Goetz (145), Jack Rettler (152), Armando Manresa (120), Billy Anderson (160), Jordan Fields (195), Tswyim Lor (113) and Justin Wagner (170). The Spartans are 11-0 in dual matches this season and 1-0 in the Wisconsin Little Ten Conference.
West 43, Wis. Lutheran 22
West Bend West rallied from two early pins by Wisconsin Lutheran to win its Wisconsin Little Ten Conference opener Thursday night.
Jon Goetz and Jack Rettler got back-to-back pins at 145 and 152 pounds, respectively, to give West a 22-18 lead.
Sophomore Zack Klemstein sealed the dual match with a first period pin at 220 pounds.

GIRLS BASKETBALL Germantown 87, West 38
Four players scored in double figures for Germantown, led by Lauren Grotjahn with 20 points Saturday at home against county rival West Bend West.
Paige Groth added 14 points, Miska Cantley had 13 points and Courtney Mehring had 10 points for the Warhawks (4-2).
Grotjahn also had 11 rebounds.
Kayla Clark led West (2-3) with 18 points and Celina Wanta had 14 points.
Germantown led 51-18 at halftime.
It is Germantown’s largest margin of defeat since it beat Wilmot by 34 points in 2003, and it is West’s largest margin of defeat since it lost by 40 points to Slinger in 2009.

GYMNASTICS Manitowoc Lincoln Invitational
Kayla Janto and Amanda Wanie each scored a second-place finish in their respective events for West Bend West at Saturday’s Manitowoc Lincoln Invitational.
Janto took second with an 8.875 on balance beam, while Wanie took second on floor exercise with an 8.875.
The Spartans took fourth in the nine-team invite which included potential state-qualifying teams Oshkosh, Manitowoc and Grafton/ Cedarburg.
Oshkosh won the meet with a team score of 134.9. Manitowoc was second with a 131.025, followed by Grafton/Cedarburg (128.975), West (128.825), Menomonee Falls/ Germantown (128.6), Hartford Union (114.875), Valders/Roncalli (106.4), Wisconsin Rapids (103.675) and Kaukauna (101.85).
West didn’t have any competitors in the all-around. Hartford’s individual results were not available.
Janto was also sixth on vault with an 8.7, and Wanie was also sixth on the uneven bars with an 8.275.
West Bend East High School first-quarter honor roll


Badger Middle School first-quarter honor roll

High honors (4.0 GPA)


Honors (3.4-3.999 GPA)


Wisconsin wins $22.7 million in Race to the Top funds
By Erin Richards of the Journal Sentinel

After losing previous rounds of federal Race to the Top grant competitions, Wisconsin won a slice of funding Thursday: a $22.7 million grant that will help expand and improve services for young children in day care centers, preschools and kindergarten classrooms. Wisconsin joined Colorado, Illinois, New Mexico and Oregon in sharing the $133 million Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, the U.S. Department of Education announced Thursday. Wisconsin's grant will be spent over four years on strengthening and expanding the YoungStar child care rating system and also accelerating work on a data system that would track kids in early childhood and target more disadvantaged children for services.
A main goal is to help close the "readiness" gap between children who are white and from middle- to upper-income families and those who are of color and/or from low-income households. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds often enter the K-12 system behind their more affluent peers in terms of social development and academic exposure. "Improving the quality of early childhood development will pay dividends for all Wisconsin citizens and future generations and ensure children are better prepared to succeed in school and in life," Department of Children and Families Secretary Eloise Anderson said in a statement Thursday. The awards announced Thursday represent the latest competition among states for Race to the Top dollars. The $4.35 billion federal education grant competition was launched in 2009 by the Obama administration and initially was fueled by stimulus dollars. Wisconsin's applications for the most lucrative rounds of the competition were not selected for funding. The state's first application last year for the early learning grant was also denied, and nine other states won funding to improve and expand quality early-learning programs. This year, the Department of Education asked the next five highest-scoring state applicants, including Wisconsin, to resubmit their requests with modifications to use half the money initially requested. The Wisconsin grant will bring together three state agencies - the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Health Services - to build an early-childhood data tracking system. That system will help align services and standards across programs such as YoungStar and Head Start; a federal program to improve school readiness of low-income children; and 4-year-old kindergarten. Tracking outcomes for those children could help highlight areas for improvement and also identify more high-risk infants, toddlers and preschoolers for services. "High quality early learning opportunities are key to preparing all students for school success and reducing achievement gaps before they start," Tony Evers, state superintendent of public instruction, said in a statement Thursday.

The details of Wisconsin's successful Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant application can be read on the Department of Children and Families website. Another Race to the Top funding stream has asked for individual districts to submit plans for improvement, and a network of rural schools in Wisconsin is among the finalists for funding. The Race to the Top district-level grants will be announced before the end of the year.