

## ND BOYS BASKETBALL COACH

On Wednesday, Nov. 3, the Notre Dame Board of Trustees proudly announced that they completed the hiring process to replace long-time Coach Mike Rapone (ND Class of 1971) for the 2023 season by voting unanimously to name his son Mikey Rapone (ND Class of 2002 and member of 2001 ND NYS Championship basketball team) as the new Boys Varsity Basketball Coach at the Union St. school.

Mikey Rapone has over fifteen years coaching at Notre Dame working with athletes, parents, administrators, and community members. During the interview process Mikey commented that coaching in various positions at Notre Dame has enabled him to learn how to successfully motivate student-athletes by ascertaining their strengths as well as their weaknesses and to use this knowledge to assist them in working to achieve beyond their limitations while forging a team first attitude. He stated, "I have gained an understanding of the unique balance of discipline, respect, support, and approachability one needs to maintain with student-athletes to be a successful coach. I feel that I have developed a great rapport with the teams I have coached and am proud of the relationships we share."

In describing how he developed his coaching style, the younger Rapone stated, "Throughout my time at Notre Dame, I have been able to learn from the best coaches in Section V history, not just our schools' history. The pedigree that I have been exposed to has enabled me to build my own coaching style through the merging of their ideologies. I have been able to learn basketball coaching strategies by spending 15+ years on the sidelines with my father. I consider myself blessed to have played for Section V Hall of Fame coach Bill Sutherland, Notre Dame Hall of Fame coaches Bill Wade and Dave Pero Sr. while having access to discuss coaching philosophies with Wade Bianco and Marc Staley who are also both Hall of Fame coaches. I also was able to draw from coaching alongside Joe Zambito, Rick Rapone, Billy Sutherland, ND HOF coach Rick Mancuso and Jimmy Fanara. That is a coaching tree that anyone interested in becoming a coach would love to have been able to learn from and it has prepared me well to maintain the tradition of excellence that is Notre Dame Basketball."

Commenting on replacing a coach of his father stature, Mikey stated that "Nobody can replace my father. However, there is nothing more I would like to do than to be the next coach of the Notre Dame Basketball program that he spent 40+ years building. I plan to coach in the way that he has envisioned his

program to be run by his successor and in a manner Notre Dame can be proud of. I am not my father. We haven't always agreed on coaching strategies and personnel but the one thing I definitely share with my dad is his love and passion for Notre Dame, her student-athletes and especially the Notre Dame Boys Basketball Program."

Coach Mike Rapone, who is the all-time winningest coach in Section V Boys Basketball history, will be coaching in his 42nd and final season this year as Section V celebrates its 100th season of Boys Basketball, closing out a career that already includes 708 wins, 9 Section V titles, 5 Regional and 2 New York State Championships. Mikey Rapone will assume the coaching reins of one of the area's most recognizable programs at the completion of the 2022 season.