

Barnhill brings experience to Newton

By TROY HYDE/NDN Sports Writer

Posted: Friday, March 28, 2008 11:12 AM CDT

If someone were to look at the resume of new Newton girls soccer coach Rick Barnhill, it would be hard to not be impressed.

Barnhill has 17 years experience in the field and has coached both boys and girls at nearly every level possible. And he has been successful at those levels, too.

His high school resume includes guiding three teams to their first-ever winning seasons. He coached in Mason City, Davenport and still coaches girls soccer in Albert Lea, Minn., during the fall. He has also coached at Waldorf College and Graceland College and has coached four different teams at the professional level.

But it doesn't stop there.

Barnhill also has coached two club teams and currently works as an Associate Director for Eurotech International, an organization responsible for conducting camps around the United States and soccer tours in South America and Europe. "As you can see, I have made soccer my life," Barnhill said. "It is a full-time job."

His most recent job, besides his latest endeavor at Newton, is coaching girls soccer in the fall at Albert Lea. He has been there for four seasons and took a struggling program to the state tournament this past season.

"I like to tell my teams that I want to see success before it happens," Barnhill said. "I want the kids to have confidence. We need to take risks and feel the freedom to take those risks."

Barnhill began his playing career at the age of 10 in Norway and then in California. His high school career happened in Santa Monica, Calif., and then he traveled to Marycrest College in Davenport for his college career.

The final step in his playing career came in amateur leagues in Miami, Los Angeles and Ann Arbor, Mich.

Barnhill said he puts a lot of stock into the mental aspect of the game, maybe even more than most coaches. He uses practices to prepare for the games and then lets the players take over when it comes time to play.

"I am going to instill the players with a phrase," Barnhill said. "I am going to say 'speed for thought, speed of action,' a lot in practices. That is when you try to increase the decision making and technical skills.

"I'll prepare us for the games during the week, and the players will perform in the games. They'll know what is expected of them."

Don't expect to hear Barnhill if you are on the other side of the field during games.

"I am not a screamer," Barnhill said. "That to me is silly."

Barnhill comes to Newton in place of Nolan Carson, who moved to Omaha after last season.

The Cardinals were 11-4 a year ago and lost in the second round of the postseason to Cedar Rapids Jefferson.

"There's a standard that Nolan has established here," Barnhill said. "There's always been good soccer here. I want to keep that same standard, but it'll be challenging."

The Newton soccer team opens their season Tuesday against perennial power Ames, who advanced to the state tournament last season.

"We'll have a tough one right out of the gate," Barnhill said.