

GARDEN CITY LIFE **SPORTS**

Adelphi Searching for New Men's Basketball Coach

By Leslie Feffer

Joe DiBari, the sports information director at Adelphi University, knew that the head coach position would attract many qualified applicants from all over the country. He just didn't expect to receive Don Nelson's resume. It came in a large, flat envelope, bearing Nelson's name in the return address. "I knew that Don Nelson was looking for another coaching job," remarked DiBari. "I just didn't think he'd be interested in Adelphi."

Scanning the resume for NBA experience, DiBari quickly realized that it came from a college basketball coach from the Midwest, not an NBA legend. Still the search committee has received 60-70 resumes from qualified candidates and is in the process of interviewing 11 applicants. The committee met with all 11 by Thursday, May 25, and has narrowed the field to two candidates, who went through a second round of interviews, during the week after Memorial Day. Ideally, they will name their new coach in the first or second week of June.

Besides DiBari, the search committee includes Athletic Director Robert E. Hartwell, two team trainers, the women's basketball coach, and team member Danny Gimpel, a point guard who will be a junior next season.

As of Monday, May 22, after having met with about half of the possible new coaches, the committee is giving serious consideration to two candidates, including former Adelphi assistant coach Bill Maranz. DiBari noted that they have seen "a lot of good candidates...no one that just jumps out at you."

This is a major priority for Adelphi's Athletic department—they need to have a head coach in place, so that recruiting can begin. Although they are under a certain

amount of time pressure, the search committee is being extremely circumspect. "There are so many talented coaches out there who know the X's and O's," cautioned DiBari. "But when you find that person who really cares about the kids...that's what you hope to bring out in the interview process."

One of the biggest challenges is trying to look beyond the pat answers—what people think the committee wants to hear - by carefully phrasing their questions to the applicants.

Whoever becomes the new head basketball coach will have some pretty big shoes to fill. Jim O'Connor was at the helm for seven impressive seasons, which included: a bid to the NCAA Division II Tournament this spring, the ECAC Division II Championship in 1994, and the distinction of beating the highly-rated Philadelphia Textile team twice in the same season [1995]. During the 1992-93 season, he was named Division II Coach of the Year by the Metropolitan Basketball Writers Association. He closed out his seven years at Adelphi with a career record of 111-91 (.550)

Coach O'Connor certainly made a name for himself at Adelphi and will take his talent to the University of New Haven, a Division II school that can offer him more money for recruiting and scholarships. DiBari observed that this is "a great step up for him," and that if he is as successful at New Haven as he was at Adelphi, he should eventually be coaching at a Division I school. According to DiBari, the Panthers will miss him, but they realize that it's a good move for him. "He spent a lot of time recruiting these guys, so it was tough on him," remarked the sports information director. "That's the hardest thing to replace, to find somebody with the same attitude."