

WEST IRONDEQUOIT COACH CHRIST CARDON WILL STEP DOWN AT END OF SEASON

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Boys basketball coach Chris Cardon to retire at end of season, his 37th



The Irondequoit boys basketball season starts at home Friday night against Pittsford Sutherland, and it will be the last with Chris Cardon at the helm. The Hall-of-Fame coach has decided his 37th season leading Irondequoit will be the final one in a career that has earned him widespread respect. A 2019 inductee into the New York State Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame, Cardon told his players and their families of his decision on Monday night.

"It takes a lot of energy and time to run a program right way and although I still have the passion to coach, I think it's time for someone else to lead," said Cardon, who retired from teaching physical education in West Irondequoit in 2016. "If you do the job the right way, it's camps, year-round workouts and summer league and fall league. I still would like to be around coaching in some capacity and maybe one day return here as a volunteer coach, but right now it's time for someone else.

“This program has meant everything to me.”

Just as Cardon has to Irondequoit hoops.

This is his 39th year in the program. The 64-year-old coached junior-varsity for two seasons prior to taking over varsity in 1986. His 501 career wins rank first among active Section V boys basketball coaches; he is fifth overall behind Batavia Notre Dame’s Mike Rapone (728), Bishop Kearney/Cardinal Mooney’s Ed Nietopski (545), Scio’s Roger Rigby (527) and Prattsburgh’s Jim Burke (517).

“Coach Cardon is an icon in the Rochester sports scene and his player-centric style has always impressed me,” said West Irondequoit CSD Superintendent, Dr. Aaron Johnson. “Coach Cardon lives and breathes basketball but, most importantly, focuses on developing young people of character, discipline, dedication and hard work. Those exceptional former players are his most incredible legacy.”

A Greece native, the crowning achievement for Cardon’s program came in 2017 when Irondequoit won the Class A state championship. That was the start of a two-year run when the Eagles went 47-6, won back-to-back Section V titles and reached the state semifinals both years. One other squad (2010-11) won sectionals and five others were runners-up. He is a member of the Frontier Field Walk of Fame and was the 2022 Rochester Press-Radio Club high school Coach of the Year.

“I’ll miss being in the gym every day. I love practice, the behind-the-scenes stuff. That’s what I’ll miss most – being around the kids and teaching them the game” Cardon said. “I know it’s cliché, but in my opinion the journey is really the special part of coaching.”

A perennial contender, the Eagles have been under .500 just six times in Cardon’s 36 seasons. The last decade has been by far the best 10-year stretch in program history. Irondequoit has averaged 17.2 wins, reached five Section V championship games (won two) and been a top-3 seed in sectionals seven times.

“It has been an honor to be the coach here. We built a program, I think, the community can be proud of and I have been blessed as much as anyone anywhere.”