

UW FOOTBALL | PAUL CHRYST FIRED



JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL

UW athletic director Chris McIntosh, left, and defensive coordinator Jim Leonhard address reporters during a news conference announcing the firing of football coach Paul Chryst on Sunday. Leonhard was named the team's interim coach.

Bold move carries risk

There's no guarantee that changing coach will have positive result

It took Chris McIntosh 15 months and one day to deliver his first official *wow* moment as University of Wisconsin athletic director.

His firing of football coach Paul Chryst on Sunday came roughly 96 hours after McIntosh sat across from me at a table inside Kellner Hall and gave a state-of-the-program update.

My impression after leaving that interview Wednesday afternoon was Chryst's job was nowhere near being in jeopardy, which either means I'd be easy to bluff at a poker table or the Badgers' 34-10 home loss to Bret Bielema and Illinois led McIntosh to a spot he couldn't have imagined being in four days earlier.

"I won't comment on how long I've been wrestling with this," McIntosh said during a phone conversation Sunday



JIM POLZIN



MORRY GASH, ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Badgers have produced defenses that have ranked among the nation's stingiest virtually every year since Leonhard took over as coordinator in 2017.

night. "I'll just say my decision is based on the state that our program is in today. This isn't a game-by-game decision. It's too big of a decision for it to be that. But it's my job to take stock



Badgers at Northwestern

When, where: 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Evanston, Ill.

TV: Big Ten Network.

of where we're at and determine what's the best course forward."

The best course forward, McIntosh believed, was to move on from Chryst and promote defensive coordinator Jim Leonhard to interim coach. McIntosh told me "it was a decision I made" and, when I asked if feedback from boosters, former players or other constituents were a factor in his decision, he said, "I don't think it's appropriate for me to be necessarily influenced by that."

Before getting into the ramifications of a decision that's out of character for UW, I'm going

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PACKERS | GAME 4

Third straight win little bumpy

Defense delivers late against 3rd-string QB

JASON WILDE

For the State Journal

GREEN BAY — Aaron Rodgers pondered the question for a moment.

The quarterback had just presided over the Green Bay Packers' not-especially-aesthetically-pleasing 27-24 overtime victory over the New England Patriots at Lambeau Field, a game in which he played "terrible" at times (his word), the much-hyped Green Bay defense struggled against an undermanned Patriots offense (being directed by rookie third-string quarterback Bailey Zappe) and coach Matt LaFleur confessed to warning his assistant coaches the team was on the cusp of being "booed out of the stadium" if the offense went three-and-out to start the second half.

Sure, the victory — their third in a row after a listless performance to open the season at Minnesota — had improved the Packers' record to 3-1 heading into their London trip to face the New York Giants, but given how little the 10½-point un-



Packers 27, Patriots 24 (OT)

Key: Green Bay goes 77 yards in a 12-play drive that lasts nearly seven minutes before Mason Crosby's winning kick.

Next: 8:30 a.m. Sunday, vs. New York Giants, London, NFLN.

derdog Patriots had going for them coming into the game beyond a legendary coach, it was not supposed to be as arduous a task as it ended up being for the home team.

And so, Rodgers was asked, is winning this way sustainable?

"Sustainable? I think winning is sustainable, for sure," Rodgers replied, though one could hear the "but" coming from a mile away.

"This way of winning, I don't think, is sustainable, because it puts too much pressure on our defense. Obviously, I've got to play better — and will play better. ... But, we've got to play better in all three phases. That being said, listen, this is a New England team that's not as bad as their record. They're 1-3, they're obviously



KAMIL KRZACZYNSKI, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Packers kicker Mason Crosby (2) celebrates after his 31-yard field goal during overtime Sunday at Lambeau Field.

incredibly well-coached.

"This is a game we had to win. For sure. I mean, you can't be 2-2 losing to a third-string quarterback and not playing great in all three phases. So, we had to have this one. That doesn't take anything away from the joy of winning; but this was one we had to have."

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Interim coach has history of success

JAKE KOCOROWSKI

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The number of titles Jim Leonhard has held at the University of Wisconsin increased Sunday. From walk-on to All-American to assistant coach to defensive coordinator and now interim coach.

UW athletic director Chris McIntosh announced the move to name Leonhard as the leader of the football program Sunday night. Leonhard replaces Paul Chryst, who went 67-25 as the Badgers' coach.

Here are five things to know about Leonhard, his playing career and rise in coaching.



Leonhard

From unheralded recruit to All-American

Leonhard came to UW as a walk-on starting with the 2001 season, but he made a much greater impact than anyone could have imagined. He started his first game at safety in August 2002 against Fresno State, recording two interceptions and a key fourth-quarter pass breakup to seal a 23-21 victory.

He went on to become a first-team All-American by various publications in each of the next three seasons between 2002-04, and he still is tied with cornerback Jamar Fletcher for the school record for career interceptions (21).

Proving himself once against at the pro level

The Tony native signed with the Buffalo Bills as an undrafted free agent starting with the 2005 season and went on to have a productive 10-year career in the NFL. He played for five teams — the Bills, Baltimore Ravens, New York Jets, Denver Broncos and Cleveland Browns — before retiring after the 2014 season.

He emerged and thrived in the secondary in both Baltimore and New York, becoming a key component of those Rex Ryan-led defenses. He came away with 14 career interceptions in 10 seasons, but he also

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UW VOLLEYBALL

Comeback yields 9th win at home

DENNIS PUNZEL

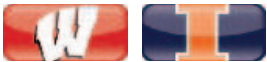
For the State Journal

In a match of hundreds of potential turning points on the court, one of the biggest came on the sidelines Sunday.

The No. 8 University of Wisconsin volleyball team was trailing Illinois 2-1 in sets and looked to be going down by three points in the fourth set after a kill by the Illini's Brooke Mosher at the end of an extended rally.

But UW associate head coach Gary White spotted an Illinois net violation on the first swing of that point, one that went undetected by the officials but not

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No. 8 Badgers 3, Illinois 2

Key: UW scores the match's final seven points.

Next: 7 p.m. Wednesday, at Indiana, BTN.