

# Southern Door hires Mallien as athletic director

Mike Shaw Special to Door County Advocate  
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Korey Mallien is back in the high school sports arena, but this time he's answering questions from reporters instead of asking them.

Mallien, 49, the former longtime sports editor for the Door County Advocate, made for a high-profile hire last week when he took the job of athletic director in the Southern Door School District, his alma mater.

The Southern Door School Board officially approved his contract Monday



Korey  
Mallien

night. But because he had already accepted an offer from the administration, Mallien was allowed to settle into his office and take care of some preliminary legwork and get-acquainted sessions.

Former AD Michelle Kanipes left to become middle-school and high-school principal at Washington Island.

After having his position eliminated at the twice-weekly Sturgeon Bay

newspaper in May 2017, Mallien four months later joined the Door County Economic Development Corp. as director of its business/education partnership programs. Mallien resigned his DCEDC position July 31.

"I feel like this is a better fit for what I really love and have a passion for, and that's sports," Mallien said. "It's what I've always been around from my first journalism job – the high school scene especially."

The athletic director serves as an

See MALLIEN, Page 3B

# Mallien

Continued from Page 1B

“event manager” for all home school activities, Mallien said, and must schedule all nonconference games and referees for the varsity sports; the junior varsity, which is now a two-tier program that eliminated freshman-only teams; and the middle school.

“I’m also going to reach out to people I know like (Gibraltar AD) Peggy Tanck, someone I greatly admire,” Mallien said. “I want to tell her, ‘Take me through a school year and the process needed to make it run smoothly.’”

Southern Door sponsors 12 programs, including co-ed golf in the spring, the traditional boys season. Additionally, the school contributes boys and girls swimmers to a Sturgeon Bay-led, three-school co-op team.

Southern Door has been the most-dominant sports school in Door County for the past few years and, arguably, in the Packerland Conference. The Eagles have won Advocate columnist Jon Gast’s unofficial “Packerland All-Sports Standings” for four years running and enter 2018-19 as defending league champs in football, boys and girls basketball and girls cross country.

And that’s not even counting swimmers Brock Aune and Luke Bousley, key parts of a Clippers boys team that finished sixth in the state in Division 2 last winter. Both Aune and Bousley qualified for the state meet.

Among the first items on Mallien’s to-do list was traveling on the team bus to Winneconne for the football team’s season opener Friday night. The Eagles, a three-time defending league champ with plenty of talent back, absorbed a somewhat eye-opening 37-6 non-conference thumping.

Mallien called it a “tough game,” but the result was secondary to his main purpose of getting a read on the style of new head coach Ryan Zuehlke, whom he knew only casually as a sports source.

“He got on the bus (and took command),” Mallien said of Zuehlke, who’s also a semipro offensive lineman with the Door County Destroyers. “The first thing he said was: ‘All right, sit down, quiet, are you here, are you here?’ He’s not a yeller or screamer or some-

one who uses intimidation, like you might expect from a guy as big as he is.”

Mallien is quite familiar with Southern Door athletics as a former player and sports parent himself. He attended Southern Door from first grade up, except for his sophomore year spent living with his father in Carney, Mich., in the Upper Peninsula.

A 1987 graduate, he was a two-way varsity lineman in football as a junior and senior, and a starter at forward in basketball as a senior. He earned second-team all-Packerland honors in football during his senior season.

His daughter Kayli concentrated on basketball during her high school career but also played a few seasons of volleyball and softball. Younger daughter Hanna also played basketball but will be remembered for softball, as a starting pitcher from the second game of her freshman season onward. Hanna is on school top-10 softball lists in 10 categories.

Korey helped his daughters’ fortunes along – and those of other Southern Door girls – by coaching seventh-grade basketball for two years; running the district’s summer softball team in Allouez for a time for former head coach Pat Delcore; various other volunteerism; and co-founding the Batgirls club softball team that he said has been a feeder system for the varsity and a “big reason” for its year-in, year-out success.

Mallien is also a certified basketball official but will now have to back out of games involving Southern Door. His wife, Jodi, is a fourth-grade teacher at Southern Door and has been with the district for more than 20 years.

He’s a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and was a general assignment reporter at the Rhinelander Daily News for five months before joining the Advocate in 1992.

The AD position is only half-time, but Mallien said there could be opportunities to get full-time hours by working as a classroom aide or getting licensed as a substitute teacher. He did not rule out becoming a fully certified teacher, under a new state program that allows people with bachelor’s degrees and career expertise in a subject to enter the teaching field without a specific education degree.