

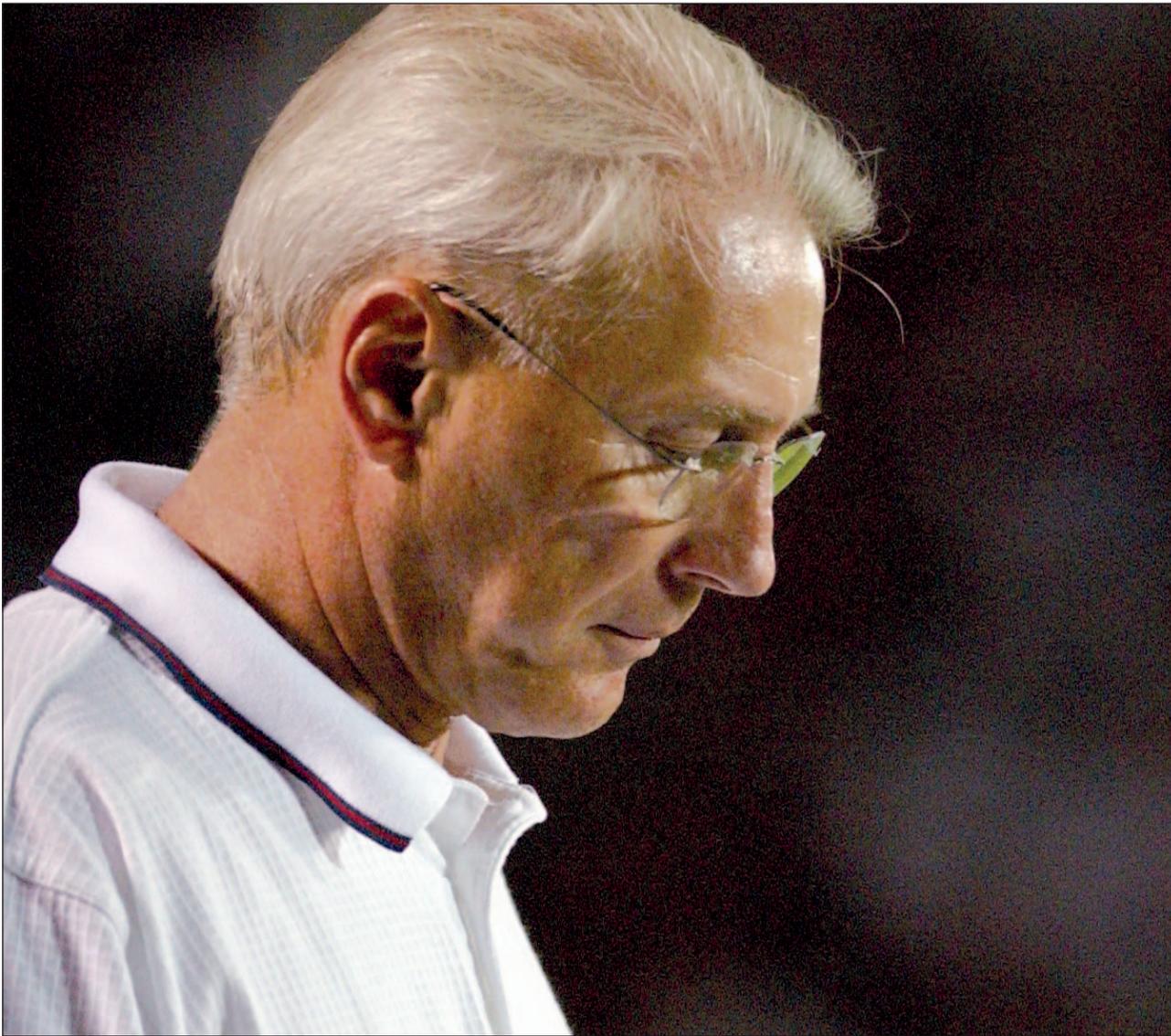
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

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University of Arizona, Tucson

Mackovic gets midseason ax



Former Arizona head coach, John Mackovic surveys the field during Saturday's 13-10 loss to TCU. Mackovic was fired yesterday after starting the season 1-4 and compiling a 10-18 record in his two-plus seasons as head coach.

Coach fired with 2 years left on contract, 10-18 record at UA

By Brett Fera
SPORTS EDITOR

Arizona head football coach John Mackovic was fired yesterday, athletic director Jim Livengood announced at a press conference after speaking with President Peter Likins and holding separate meetings with Wildcat players and Mackovic.

Mackovic led the UA program to an overall mark of 10-18, failing to take the Wildcats to a bowl game or produce a winning record in his 2 1/2 seasons at the helm. Arizona won just three of 17 Pacific 10

conference games during that span.

"John Mackovic is a good man and a good football coach, but, for whatever reason, has not been a good fit for the University of Arizona football program," Livengood said.

Wildcat defensive coordinator Mike Hankwitz, a 33-year coaching veteran in his first year at the UA after spending the previous six at Texas A&M, will replace Mackovic on an interim basis, according to Livengood.

Mackovic, who replaced longtime head coach Dick Tomey following the 2000 season, was in the third year of a five-year, \$4 million contract. The buyout of the remainder of Mackovic's contract will give him \$909,000.

The coach was seen leaving his office on the south side of McKale Center minutes before the press conference was scheduled to start.

Mackovic's exit came just hours after the program's fourth straight defeat, a 13-10 overtime loss at the hands of Texas Christian University that sent the team's

record to 1-4 on the season.

"It's my responsibility to provide the best collegiate experience possible for each of our almost 500 student athletes," Livengood said. "It's not — and it never will be — totally about winning. It is about the experience."

After outlasting a near-mutiny last November, in which players complained to Likins about the way Mackovic was treating them, the third-year head coach's tumultuous stint in Tucson was no easier

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PAINTING TIME

Freshmen get blue on A-Day

By Nathan Tafoya
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On Saturday, over 300 freshmen woke up early in the morning, grabbed some mops and buckets, and willingly got messy.

They weren't cleaning their dorms or auditioning for a new musical; they were painting the "A" on A-Mountain.

The event, called A-Day, is a chance for freshmen to learn about the traditions and history of the university.

The UA's Blue Key National Honorary sponsored the event.

Freshmen arrived at the Old Main fountain at 8:30 a.m. After receiving a crash course in UA history and learning the words to "Bear Down," they were piled in buses that took them to the mountain.

Since 1915, the "A" has usually received a whitewash coat, but after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, red, white and blue have striped the giant letter.

The freshmen re-painted the bottom third of the "A" blue. The red and white remained untouched.

"It would have been difficult to organize something where we painted the red and white because they are on the top," said Brittney Schmidt, president of Blue Key, explaining that the paint would trickle down and make a mess. "It was more of a symbolic gesture this year."

When dealing with the nation's colors, protocol calls for any display to run from blue at the top, then white, then red, said Jim Drnek, Blue Key adviser.

The "A" is painted red, white and then blue at the base.

Drnek said he has been asked to switch the colors, but decided not to do it this year because it would have been too complicated.

"Coming up here is more of a fun activity versus, you know, painting the whole thing and making sure it's perfect," Drnek said. "We don't really have the resources to correct it. Maybe someday we will."

The 300 freshmen did not seem to care about the bottom third of the "A" being red or blue.



Communication freshman Meredith Entsminger and undecided freshman Kelly Baublits battle a barrage of blue paint on Saturday morning.

Collette Gallegos and Katie Lopez both grew up in Tucson and said they have wanted to paint the "A" since they were children.

"I painted the bottom of that blue part," Gallegos said, pointing. "I only painted like, a

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Regents OK UA Science Center plan

By Tim Lake & Shelley Shelton
CONTRIBUTING WRITER & SENIOR WRITER

With the mayor of Tucson and several other city officials present to show their support, the Arizona Board of Regents approved a plan for the UA to spend more than \$56 million toward a downtown science center.

The \$82 million UA Science Center, expected to open Jan. 1, 2008, will include a bridge spanning both sides of the freeway near downtown Tucson. It will be part of the Rio Nuevo downtown revitalization project.

"This is the first step in revitalizing downtown," said Regent Jack Jewett, after the regents meeting Friday in Tempe. Jewett is from Tucson. "This is a project that I believe will just be extraordinary."

About the appearances of Republican Mayor Bob Walkup, City Councilman Fred Ronstadt, and other city officials, Jewett said, "They didn't mail in their support. They're here, and I think that's a testament to how important the project is."

Regent Fred Boice, also from Tucson, said he supports the move as part of an ongoing trend among universities.

"Embedding the university in the community

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