

Whisenhunt has options; Cards may be low on list

Atlanta, Miami, Steelers also have interest in assistant

By **DARREN URBAN**
TRIBUNE

Everybody is thinking about hiring Ken Whisenhunt for their vacant head coaching job.

That includes the Cardinals, who brought the Steelers offensive coordinator to Arizona for an interview Friday — which just so happened to be the same day the Steelers' job opened up when Bill Cowher resigned.

Whisenhunt also met with Atlanta earlier this week. Miami is expected to interview him soon.

So it was a modest Whisenhunt who said it was Steelers defensive coordinator Dick Lebeau who gave him the best advice by remembering he already has a job.

"I have got a job, and it is as offensive coordinator of the Pittsburgh Steelers," Whisenhunt said. "If I get a chance to move up, that is great. If I don't, the job I have got is a pretty good one."

At this point, it's impossible to believe Whisenhunt won't be a head coach somewhere in 2007.

The Steelers are an obvious landing spot. Whisenhunt and fellow Pittsburgh assistant Russ Grimm were the only two candidates identified by Steelers president Art Rooney II Friday to replace Cowher, and

while Pittsburgh will expand its search, players have made it clear they would like the Steelers to stay in-house with a hire.

Rooney said the team will ask Cowher for his advice, although Cowher seemed careful not to endorse either Whisenhunt or Grimm Friday during his press conference.

"I've never been one to lack an opinion," Cowher said. "I'll help any way I can."

Even if Whisenhunt isn't picked for Pittsburgh, he will have options. The Falcons were reportedly impressed with him, and his ties to the



Ken Whisenhunt

area — he is from Atlanta and played collegiately at Georgia Tech — make him a prime candidate to replace the fired Jim Mora.

The Cardinals would seem to be further down on Whisenhunt's list, although he was careful not to say much of anything Friday when he met with the media.

"Certainly there are things you want to discuss as far as how you do things," Whisenhunt said when asked about the poor history of the Cardinals. "Coming from Pittsburgh and understanding how we did things, it gives me a little bit of a game plan about how I want to approach things."

Offensively, Whisenhunt noted the talent the Cards have at the skill positions. Young,

talented quarterbacks such as Matt Leinart "don't grow on trees," he said.

And speaking about coaching the Steelers' offense, Whisenhunt said "rather than try to make (players) fit our scheme, we have tried to adjust our scheme to fit them."

"I think that would be the situation here," he added.

Defensively, Whisenhunt said he would also try to adapt the scheme to the players, and said the attacking "Blitzburgh" philosophy of the Steelers could work for the Cardinals.

Whisenhunt just wants to get a chance at a head coaching job to put those philosophies into play.

"But I'm not the one making the decision on that," Whisenhunt said. "I hope there is a

Countdown to a coach

A rundown of the remaining coaching interviews for the Cardinals:

Today: Chargers offensive coordinator Cam Cameron

Sunday: Colts assistant head coach Jim Caldwell

Monday: Titans offensive coordinator Norm Chow

Tuesday: Steelers assistant head coach Russ Grimm

team out there that thinks I am ready."

The Cardinals continue their interview process today in San Diego with Chargers offensive coordinator Cam Cameron.

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JAN 6 2007