

Whisenhunt sees potential in Cardinals

Club's talent level,
new stadium,
cap room all pluses

By **DARREN URBAN**
TRIBUNE

Ken Whisenhunt wasn't sure he wanted to be in Arizona when he came the first time to interview for the Cardinals' vacant head coaching job.

It was understandable. His loyalty was to the Pittsburgh Steelers, a team for which he had worked for six years and which also had a coaching opening. He was in the middle of a whirlwind period when he also interviewed for the open Falcons job in his hometown of Atlanta.

Then Whisenhunt left town. He got a chance to take a breath.

And he started hearing from coaching friends around the NFL that told him he'd "better look at this situation" with the Cardinals.

"By the time I came in for a second interview," Whisenhunt said, recalling his trip to meet with the team exactly one week later, "I felt if I had a chance to get this job, it would be a great job."

It's Whisenhunt's job now, after the Cardinals officially introduced him Tuesday.

The Cards had been intrigued with Whisenhunt even before they met with him face-to-face. Whisenhunt's mock job interview on DVD, one of many conducted by the NFL for assistant coaches so teams can have a "pre-read" of possible head coaches, jumped out at them.

Vice president of football operations Rod Graves said Whisenhunt's initial interview also went well.

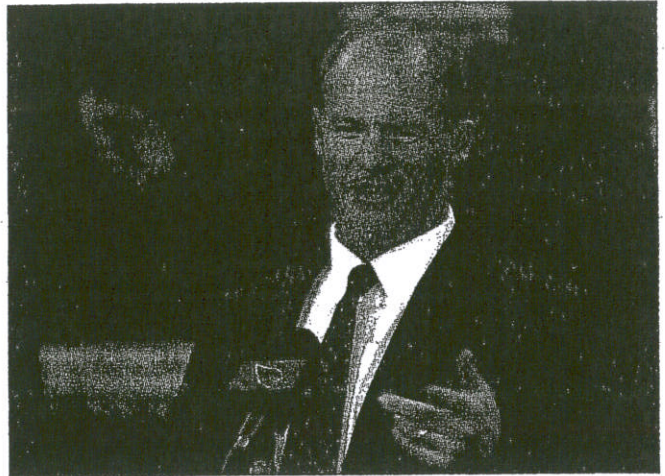
They just needed to sell Whisenhunt on the marriage.

"He clearly got more excited as we continued the dialogue," Cardinals vice president Michael Bidwill said.

SEE CARDS • PAGE C4

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READY TO FLY: New Arizona coach Ken Whisenhunt answers questions from the media during a news conference Tuesday to introduce him.