When the Bloomington South let their head football coach go a few weeks back, local rumors were stirring that SHS Head Coach Mo Moriarity would leave the Lions to return to the school where he tasted state championship glory.

Turns out those rumors were at least half true.

No, Moriarity is not returning to South, but he did resign as Salem football Head Coach Monday night.

Calls to Moriarity Tuesday morning were not immediately returned, but School Board Member Jason Pepmeier said he thinks coaching and being athletic director is too much for one person.

“I really think he (Moriarity) wants to concentrate on the athletic duties,” Pepmeier said. “I think the death of (former SHS AD) Randy (Johnson) really affected Mo. He just feels like it is too much to be AD and football coach so he gave up his coaching responsibilities and be a full-time AD. That's the way it's going to be as of now.”

Mark “Bubba” Abbott, who is president of the Salem Alumni Football Association, summed up the group he represents feelings with one word.

“We are obviously disappointed,” he said. “I think everybody thought that it was going to be a longer-term situation than what it ended up being. I have not spoken with Mo about it yet, but I think the general consensus is disappointment.

“With that being said, our focus has to turn to trying to do the same thing we did two years ago when we hired Coach Mo. We need to get the best possible candidate we can, as long as that works out with the administration and what they are looking for.”

Pepmeier said the board decided to take applications for the next 60 days and then make a decision as to who will be the next coach after that.

“It will probably be mid-January or so before we get someone hired,” he said.

In his first year at the program, 2011, Salem managed just two wins, both over first-year program, Silver Creek.

This past season, he helped the Lions double the production and they earned four wins.

Pepmeier said he knows the coach had hoped for more, but it's clear to see that a solid foundation has been laid for the next coach.

“I know Mo didn't get the program back to where he wanted to, but he did get our numbers back up and he has things turning in the right direction,” Pepmeier said. “It is not showing as far as wins or losses but as a Board member I do feel like things are moving in the right direction. He got kids interested and the numbers are good, and hopefully, whoever inherits this thing will reap the benefits of the ground work that has been laid.”

Abbott agreed, “We made great strides in the two years Mo was here and and a lot of things went into place as far as work ethic and discipline.”

Abbott said the key for whoever comes in will be to keep the excitement level high at all levels from senior down to youth league.