

By EARL WATT

• Daily Leader

Tom Schroeder was asked to step down as the head coach of the Liberal Redskins.

Last week, he was asked to coach the best players in Kansas in the Shrine Bowl.

Jeanette Mize of the Kansas Shrine Bowl confirmed that Schroeder has been selected as an assistant for the West in the annual football classic.

“I didn’t know anything about it,” Schroeder said. “ I didn’t know I was being considered.”

Schroeder played in the Shrine Bowl in Wyoming when he was in high school.

“I got a phone call this morning and they asked me if I would be an assistant coach and I said I would love to,” Schroeder said.

Last week, Liberal athletic director Scott Hinkle went to Schroeder’s office the morning after a school board meeting and asked for Schroeder’s resignation. The Redskins turned in a 5-5 record this season, the best in Schroeder’s three years as coach.

But Hinkle told Schroeder that some board members and parents wanted to see the program move in a different direction.

The invitation to coach in the Shrine Bowl was an obvious pick-me-up for Schroeder.

“After the week I’ve had, it was icing on the cake,” he said. “I was pretty excited.”

Schroeder has had other contact with the Shriner organization.

Schroeder’s son Jackson was born without the ability to walk.

In the past year he has undergone surgeries that have allowed him to stand upright, and for the first time in his life Jackson was able to wiggle his toes in August.

The surgeries came at the hands of the Shriners who help children with special surgical needs.

“Obviously what the Shriner’s have done with my son Jackson, that is another great honor to be a part of a group that does so much to help kids, especially when you have been a recipient of that help,”

Schroeder said.

Great Bend’s Beau Black will be the head coach of the West, but there are other Liberal connections on the coaching staff.

Along with Schroeder, former Redskin head coach Steve Warner will also assist. Warner is currently the head coach in Buhler.

Ryan Cornelsen, a former Liberal assistant under his dad and legendary Redskin coach Gary

Cornelsen, will also assist. He is currently the head coach at LaCrosse.

Other coaches include Randall Zimmerman from Junction City and Scott Moser from Meade.

Many of Liberal's best football players in history have participated in the Shrine Bowl as has some of Liberal's most successful coaches, including Gary Cornelsen who won four state football championships.