

Ebenstein hired as new Wildcat head football coach



Robert Ebenstein was hired as the new Louisburg High School football coach following the USD 416 Board of Education meeting. Ebenstein spent five years in Louisburg as an assistant and takes over for interim coaches Gary Griffin and Jeff Lohse.

Louisburg High School will have a new leader on the sidelines when the Wildcats take the field in September, but he is a familiar face to many with the program.

Robert Ebenstein was hired as Louisburg's new head football coach and it was officially approved Monday during the monthly USD 416 Board of Education meeting. Ebenstein will take over for interim coaches Gary Griffin and Jeff Lohse.

"I am pretty pumped," Ebenstein said. "When it became available, I was definitely interested in it and it is really a privilege to be the head football coach. Everyone has been congratulating me on the job, but it really isn't a job to me because I love football so much as does every head coach. It is great to be able to do this in Louisburg because I can continue to make relationships, raise my kids here and have my family around."

Ebenstein has spent the last five years as an assistant for the Wildcats under head coaches Kyle Littrell and Griffin. He served as a line coach for Louisburg and before that he spent four years as an assistant at Washburn Rural High School. He also spent time as an assistant at Gardner-Edgerton.

It is that experience and familiarity that made it an easy choice for the Wildcats. The search for a head coach had been ongoing after the resignation of Littrell last August and Griffin and Lohse were named interim co-head coaches last season.

"I am excited about it," LHS activities director Darin Gagnebin said. "I think he will bring a new energy to the program. I know he is ready to move up to be a head coach. He is going to be faced with challenges with some coaching spots open, but he is ready to tackle that head on."

Football has always been a big part of his life. Ebenstein, a Spring Hill High School graduate, got into coaching a little sooner than he had hoped.

Ebenstein had offers to play college football, but late in his senior year he was in a car accident that resulted in a broken hip and a shattered pelvis.

"I felt like football was taken from me a little bit," Ebenstein said. "In my mind, I wasn't done with it yet."

Following high school, he had the opportunity to become an assistant coach at Highland Community College for two years before finishing his degree at Pittsburg State.

"Football is something I have loved forever," he said. "It is honestly a privilege. The kids in this community are so welcoming, especially to a Spring Hill graduate. From day one they have been nothing but respectful and any time we need something the parents are always there to help out. I am thankful for the opportunity and we will make the best of it."

Ebenstein even remembers a few battles with Louisburg while at Spring Hill – one in particular.

“I remember playing Louisburg and Griff (Gary Griffin) was the head coach when I was there,” Ebenstein said. “I remember getting screamed at by a Louisburg coach on the sideline because I got a little too close to the sideline for a hit. I just remember it was the coach who was wearing shorts when it was 20 degrees outside with huge calves and it was (former assistant) coach (Wayne) Whiting.”

Ebenstein realizes the Louisburg job is a healthy one because of those coaches that came before him that have established a strong tradition within the program.

“The staff here at Louisburg is better than anyone I have ever been with,” he said. “Working with Griff, (Larry) Aylor, Whiting, Lohse and (Billy) Neff, and then working with Littrell when he took over, they are all just a wealth of knowledge. They were very supportive of me through this process and I am very grateful to them for everything. If some of the coaches don’t end up being here next year, then I know they are just a phone call away if I need help with anything.”

Ebenstein plans to work on the offensive side of the ball, while Lohse will stay on staff as the defensive coordinator. But as far as any big sweeping changes, Ebenstein knows they don’t necessarily need to be made.

“The biggest challenge for me is to put my staple on something that has been as successful and predominant as it has been,” Ebenstein said. “Also trying to let the players see there is a change, but at the same time balancing what Louisburg football historically has been about.

“If you stick to your core beliefs, you are going to be successful in staying consistent. Honestly, what Louisburg has been built on is what I have always valued and that is committing to what you are doing and have the belief that what

we do works. There is no reason to change it if it is working.”

Ebenstein also believes a key to healthy program is staying involved with the community and he hopes his team can do that in many different ways.

“Once we get going and I can have meetings with the players, we are going to do some things to reconnect to the community a little bit,” he said. “Not that we haven’t in the past, but it hasn’t been a staple of what we have done. We will have an awards ceremony at the banquet, and to be in consideration for those, a player has to meet a certain criteria and one of those is community service and giving back to the youth leagues and camps. I think it is very important to have that connection to your community.”