

Brown approved as new head coach of Louisburg volleyball



Rich Brown was recently hired as the new head coach of the Louisburg volleyball program. He replaces Leanna Willer, who resigned her position back in December.

Rich Brown has spent close to four decades around the sport of volleyball and has held several different positions during that time.

It is a sport that has consumed much of his life, including the past 15 years as an assistant coach at different levels in the Louisburg school district. Now, Brown will focus on a new role for the upcoming season – as head coach.

Brown was approved to be the next leader of the Wildcat program following the most recent USD 416 Board of Education meeting. He takes over from former head coach Leanna Willer,

who resigned to take the same position at Olathe East.

"I'm both excited and nervous, which is pretty much my MO anytime I start something new," Brown said. "I think I'm fortunate in that I've been in the program for more than 15 years as an assistant at all levels. I know there is a culture of success the volleyball program has and I will do what I can to continue that."

Brown has most spent of his time at Louisburg as an assistant coach under Willer and former head coach Jessica Compliment, who both had state tournament runs during their tenures.

It is that experience working with both coaches that Brown believes will help him with the upcoming season and those moving forward.

"Working with Willer and Compliment helped me immensely," Brown said. "I have always gone into every job as a learner, and that attitude hasn't changed even as I get older. Compliment has taught me how important routine is to a team as the season reaches its end. She has also taught me that there is no limit to the amount of things she can fit in her backpack. She could give lessons to the Army.

"Willer has really helped bring back my love for the game. I feel that she always is looking ahead at what will give the team the best chance at success. And I have never worked with anyone as organized as her. It's going to be a challenge to try to be 50 percent as organized as she is."

This won't be Brown's first head coaching experience, however. He has spent time as head coach at Ottawa, Central Heights, Lyndon and Topeka West. He also has some collegiate experience as he served as the first assistant at Ottawa University.

"Well I think I started coaching just a couple of years after the sport was invented," Brown joked. "It feels that way sometimes. I graduated college in '85 and started coaching in'

86 when the game was very different when there was side-out scoring and no libero. College matches between good teams could last 3 hours or more.”

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Despite losing five seniors from last season, the Wildcats will bring back a core group of players from a team that reached the sub-state championship.

With a new head coach comes some changes, but Brown is looking forward to working this group of athletes.

"I am very fortunate to come to the head coaching position with a very experienced group of players," Brown said. "I am hoping to use that experience to allow players to work from a variety of positions and try to open up the offense with better communication between the kids on the court. There are a couple of places where we have made changes in the schedule so we don't end up playing the same teams three or four times a season.

"I also want our team to learn to treasure the team attitude and limit the amount of time we are dividing our attention between the court, and the things that happen in the stands. So there will be a little more isolated approach when it comes to competition time."

With summer workouts approaching in the next couple of months, Brown wants to make sure his team is prepared and ready to go when the season starts.

"This season will have a different feel for the players in many ways," Brown said. "There are new KSHSAA restrictions on 2-a-days, and length of practices will make the beginning of the season feel a bit frantic in those first 2 weeks of practices. But I also think that will help the players understand just how important it is to be ready to work each day."