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Woods named next football coach at Saint Albert Catholic

COUNCIL BLUFFS -- Saint Albert Catholic is thrilled to announce the hiring of Donnie Woods as its new head football coach.

The 38-year-old Woods is a native of Tampa, Fla. He was one of the nation's top offensive line prospects as a senior at Jefferson High School in Tampa before selecting the University of Maryland, where he was a three-year starter.

Woods came to Council Bluffs in 2009, where he helped to start the football program at Iowa Western Community College. He served as the Offensive Line Coach and Run Game Coordinator for five years. In just his fourth season with the Reivers, they became NJCAA national champions. In that 2012 season, they set national records for points per game (62.8) and total yards per game (598.4), and had the NJCAA National Offensive Player of the Year, Saint Albert Catholic alum Jake Waters.

Woods spent two years as the Defensive Coordinator at Thomas Jefferson High School before returning to Iowa Western in 2017 to become the Offensive Coordinator and Offensive Line Coach, positions he held for three seasons. He helped the Reivers to top-three national finishes in two of those years.

Woods has been the Offensive Coordinator and Offensive Line Coach at Lewis Central High School for the past three seasons. With Woods calling the plays, the Titans led Class 4A in scoring average in both 2021 (39.6) and 2022 (44.8), winning the state title in 2021 and finishing as the state runner-up in 2022.

Also in the last three years, Woods has worked as the National Director of Football Operations for the United States Football League (USFL) in Birmingham, Ala., and the Vice President of Football Operations for The Spring League, a professional football developmental league.

Woods said he felt a desire to become a head football coach, and the more he learned about Saint Albert Catholic, the more he liked. He believes the school aligns perfectly with his beliefs and core values.

“I am honored, humbled and excited to lead Saint Albert Catholic as its next head football coach,” Woods said. “We are going to repour the foundation and build a program that the players, school and community will be proud of.

“I am grateful for the Saint Albert Catholic administration and hiring committee that blessed me with this opportunity. I will work tirelessly to bring back this historic program to a level of success that we all associate with the Saint Albert brand.”

Woods was selected from a pool of five outstanding candidates. All five impressed during interviews with a panel of Saint Albert Catholic administrators, board members, teachers, coaches, parents and students.

“We are excited to welcome Coach Woods to the Saint Albert Catholic family,” Saint Albert Catholic President Anne Rohling said. “We believe he will be an outstanding asset to our student-athletes and our school.”

Saint Albert Catholic has one of the most tradition-rich football programs in the state of Iowa. The Falcons have made 29 playoff appearances and won 52 postseason games, both of which are in the top 15 in state history. In 2009, the Falcons became the third Iowa program to win 4 state championships in a 6-year span (2004, 2006, 2007, 2009).

Saint Albert had a 53-game unbeaten streak in district play from 2006 to 2014, the sixth-longest in Iowa history. The Falcons have played in 7 state championship games in all, and have qualified for the postseason in 21 of the last 25 years. They reached the UNI-Dome for the state semifinals most recently in 2020.

Woods and his wife, Libby, have two children, 6-year-old son Beau and 2-year-old daughter Millie. They will be introduced to the public on Tuesday, Dec. 20, at the conclusion of Saint Albert Catholic’s varsity girls basketball game with Kuemper Catholic.

“Coach Woods is a high-character family man who has been successful at every level,” Saint Albert Catholic Activities Director Dave Plendl said. “We believe he will provide tremendous leadership to our student-athletes.”