

Former Mountaineer, Withers, Named Head Coach

Written by Mike Kelly
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Everett Withers, the defensive coordinator and secondary coach at the University of North Carolina the last three years, has been named the interim head coach of the Tar Heels.

He replaces Butch Davis, who was fired Tuesday by the school. North Carolina is being investigated by the NCAA for nine alleged violations, including academic fraud and excessive benefits. UNC must face an NCAA Infractions Committee on October 28.

Withers, a native of Charlotte, played college football at Appalachian State University. He graduated in 1985 and played for three different coaches, Mike Working (1980-82), Mack Brown (1983) and Sparky Woods (1984-88). He was also a standout defensive back and captain for the Mountaineers from 1981-85.

Decimated by personnel losses and injuries last fall, the Tar Heels defense still ranked fourth in the ACC and 30th in the country as they virtually played with a new lineup every week. Defensive tackle Quinton Coples earned first-team All-ACC honors and linebacker Bruce Carter was a second-team pick.

Withers came to North Carolina after serving one season as the University of Minnesota's defensive coordinator in 2007. Withers also spent six seasons with the Tennessee Titans from 2001-06 under head coach Jeff Fisher. From 2002-04, Withers helped the Titans defense tally 57 interceptions, which was the most for the franchise over a three-year period since 1993-95. The 57 interceptions also ranked fourth in the AFC and eighth overall during that time. The Titans totaled 21 picks in 2004, including 16 by the secondary.

Withers was a defensive backs coach for Mack Brown at Texas from 1998-2000. He joined the Longhorns after spending three years (1995-97) as defensive coordinator at Louisville. While at Louisville, Withers helped current New York Giants All-Pro cornerback Sam Madison, who earned All-America honors for the Cardinals.

Withers broke into the NFL with the New Orleans Saints, where he worked as defensive quality control in 1994. Before that, he was defensive backs coach at Southern Mississippi for two years (1992-93) and outside linebackers coach at Tulane in 1991. He began his coaching career at Austin Peay, where he was defensive coordinator (1988-89) and special teams/wide receivers coach (1990).

Withers makes his head-coaching debut September 3 when the Tar Heels kick-off the season at Kenan Stadium against James Madison. MIX 102.3 FM will carry that game with our coverage beginning at 2:30 pm.