

Hoover Named Football Coach At Union Academy

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Brad Hoover, who was the starting fullback for the Carolina Panthers of the National Football League for nine years, has a new position. Hoover, who was a star running back at Western Carolina University, was named the new head football coach at Union Academy, a charter school in Monroe, N.C., on Monday. Union Academy is a Class 1A school and a member of the Rocky River 1A/2A Conference. The Cardinals were 5-7 last year.

Hoover, who played at Ledford High School, worked in business after retiring from the NFL. Hoover played for the Panthers from 2000-08. He ran for 909 yards and two touchdowns in his career; he caught 141 passes for 1,023 yards and five touchdowns.

Hoover went undrafted in the 2000 NFL Draft; he was later signed as a free agent by the Panthers. After a foot injury sidelined starting running back Tshimanga Biakabutuka, Hoover got two starts at tailback, including a Monday Night Football game against the Green Bay Packers where he became only the second rookie in team history to post a 100-yard game (Fred Lane was the first). After switching to fullback for his second season, he became the full-time starter in 2002. Hoover was released by the Panthers on March 8, 2010.

Hoover made a big impact at Western Carolina University being second all-time in school history in career yards. Hoover exploded his junior season by setting a school rushing record with 1,663 yards, scoring 13 touchdowns in the process. He earned first-team All-Southern Conference honors as a result. His senior year, he followed up with 1,025 yards and 12 touchdowns, good enough for second-team All-SoCon. He became only the second player in school history to post back-to-back 1,000 rushing yard seasons. His 3,616 career yards are good enough for second all-time in school history, and his 28 touchdowns place him fifth on the list. He is a member of the Sigma Chi Fraternity at Western and has contributed greatly to charitable causes in the Piedmont of North Carolina.

In 2008 Hoover was inducted by Western Carolina University into the school's Athletics Hall of Fame.

Photo Courtesy: Brad Hoover, Carolina Panthers