

Fancher Joins UNCW Coaching Staff

Written by Joe Browning
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UNCW men's basketball coach Buzz Peterson added his second assistant coach in as many weeks on Tuesday when former Appalachian State head coach

Houston Fancher joined the Seahawk coaching staff.

Fancher, 47, has worked at Tennessee the last four seasons, including the last two years as Director of Basketball Operations for the Volunteers. He is reunited with Peterson after serving as an assistant coach at ASU from 1996-2000. When Peterson left Boone to accept the head coaching post at Tulsa, Fancher was elevated to head coach of the Mountaineers.

"I'm very excited about having Houston join our Seahawk family," said Peterson, who begins his fourth season with the Seahawks in 2013-14. "When I got the job at Appalachian State, he was the first person I hired. He's a real fireball with great recruiting ties and a high energy level." The hiring of Fancher gives Peterson two previous head coaches on his staff. Former UNC Asheville Head Coach Eddie Biedenbach began work last week as an assistant for the Seahawks.

"First and foremost, this is a great opportunity to work with Buzz again," Fancher said of his new post. "We made a good combination together at Appalachian State and had a lot of success together.

"I've known Buzz and Eddie for a long time and look forward to working with Coach (Andre) Gray. Buzz knows how hungry I am to get back into coaching. I've spent two years working with a great offensive coach in Bruce Pearl and two years with a great defensive coach in Cuonzo Martin and that has enhanced my ability as a coach.

"I've worked with some great people, but I've missed the interaction on the floor with the kids and being in the mix."

After heading up ASU's program for nine seasons from 2000-09, Fancher moved over to Knoxville, where he worked with Pearl and Martin. After being the interim head coach between the two Vol skippers, Fancher stayed on as Martin's Director of Basketball Operations the last two seasons.

Fancher's resume includes more than 25 years of collegiate coaching experience, including 12 seasons as a head coach at North Greenville College (3 years) and ASU (9 years).

A native of Newport, Tenn., Fancher went 44-41 at North Greenville and then posted a 137-136 record at ASU. His tenure in Boone included Southern Conference North Division championships in 2003, 2007 and 2008.

He was named the 2003 SoCon Coach of the Year after winning the first of his three divisional crowns. In 2006-07, he was a mid-major national coach of the year finalist after piloting ASU to a school-record 25 wins, the San Juan Shootout championship, including consecutive victories over Virginia, Central Florida and Vanderbilt, and a berth in the Postseason National Invitation Tournament.

In 2007-08, Fancher led the Mountaineers to their second consecutive division crown as well as another victory over a Southeastern Conference opponent, defeating Arkansas in North Little Rock. His triumphs over Vanderbilt and Arkansas represent ASU's only wins over SEC opponents in the program's history.

Fancher recruited and coached more All-SoCon players than any other coach in Appalachian

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State history, and he also won more Southern Conference games than any other Mountaineers hoops coach. In total, 18 school records were set during Fancher's tenure, and he also produced 21 players who continued their careers as professionals overseas.

In addition to their success on the court, Fancher's squads also were presented with NCAA Public Recognition Awards in 2005-06 and 2006-07. The NCAA Public Recognition Awards honor programs that rank among the nation's top 10 percent in their sport in Academic Progress Rate scores.

Fancher began his collegiate coaching career as an assistant at Division III Maryville (Tenn.) College from 1988-92. He then took over as head coach at North Greenville from 1993-95 before taking a position as an assistant coach at Vanderbilt for the 1995-96 campaign. From 1996-2000, Fancher worked as an assistant coach (1996-98) and associate head coach (1998-2000) at ASU, and he was named the school's 14th head coach following the 1999-00 season.

Fancher received his undergraduate degree in Physical Education in 1988 from Middle Tennessee and completed his Master's Degree in Educational Administration and Supervision from Lincoln Memorial University in 1990.

Fancher and his wife, Cathy, have two sons, Hayden, 13, and Ethan, 10, and a daughter, Cameron, 4.