Written by Mike Kelly
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Uwe Erhlich was named the new mens and womens soccer coach at Watauga High School.

The school board approved the move on Monday night, and the announcement was made by WHS Athletics Director Jeff Link on Tuesday morning.

Erhlich, who was born in Germany, has been teaching since 1990 at Wilkes Central, and he's been coaching soccer since 1992. As a matter of fact, Erhlich initiated the women's program at Wilkes Central in 1992, and he coached the Eagles junior varsity boys soccer team from 1992-1997. This past season, Erhlich led the Wilkes Central women's team to the third round of the Class 2A Western Playoffs and a 12-5-2 record. The Eagles reached the Class 2A Western Semi-Finals in 2008 and produced a 17-9-1 record. Erhlich replaces interim coach Johnny Gailes, who resigned in May.

Gailes, who replaced Doug Kidd last July. Doug Kidd led the Swansboro women's team to the Class 2A state championship in May. Gailes led the WHS men to a 14-6-1 record, including a 10-2 mark, and a second-place finish in the Northwestern 4A Conference. They made the state playoffs, beat Berry Academy in the first round, but lost to East Mecklenberg in the second round. Gailes also coached the WHS women last spring, leading them to a 7-9-3 record, including a 6-4-1 mark in the NW4A. Following a slow start, the women rallied and produced a third-place finish and made the state playoffs. They lost to Providence in the opening round.

According to Link, he had several highly-qualified candidates for the job, but he felt Erhlich was the best fit academcially and athletically. As a matter of fact, Josh Martin, the men's and women's coach at Draughn High School in Burke County, was Link's second choice.