

Former Furman coach abruptly retires

Written by Mike Kelly

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Head coach Bobby Johnson called it quits on Wednesday afternoon.

In an unexpected move, Johnson, who led Furman for eight seasons, abruptly retired as the head football coach at Vanderbilt University after eight seasons. His reason for leaving were based on personal reasons.

Johnson was 29-66 during his stay with the Commodores, and he produced a 7-6 record in 2008---the schools first winning season since 1982. Vanderbilt went the Music City Bowl that season. The Commodores were 2-10 last fall.

"I am saddened by the fact Bobby has made this decision," Vice Chancellor David Williams said. "At the same token as I've said to the staff, it's our obligation to respect his decision. I did try to talk Bobby out of it. I tried to talk him out of it yesterday. I tried to talk him out of it last night, and I tried to talk him out of it this morning."

Johnson, who began his coach career in 1976, had a very successful run at Furman. He led the Paladins from 1994-2001, was 60-36, and led them to the FCS (at the time it was known as the I-AA) National Championship game in 2000.

Assistant head coach Robbie Caldwell takes over on an interim basis. Vanderbilt opens the season against Northwestern on September 4.