

Harper Takes Over At Hickory

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Monday, 27 February 2012 20:59

Tom Harper has been named the new football coach and Athletics Director at Hickory High. He replaces John Worley, who will officially retire on Wednesday. Worley, who was a teacher and a coach at Hickory for 28 years, won 72 games during his nine-year stay as head coach with the football program (but the Red Tornadoes went 0-13 last year after they forfeited

eight wins and a tie for using an ineligible player).

Harper has spent the last ten years at Alexander Central, where he was the head football coach and Athletics Director the last five years. Harper, who was the defensive coordinator under Chris Deal at Alexander Central from 2002-06, was 34-26 during his five-year stay with the Cougars as head coach. He officially took over in 2007. His first team went 4-8 that season. He finally led the Cougars to their first winning season in three years, when the Cougars went 11-2 in 2009.

Harper led Alexander Central to the state playoffs four times, and the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference title in 2010. The Cougars were 6-6 last season. Harper, an assistant coach at Freedom under Tim MacMahoh, got his first head-coaching job at East Burke in 1999. He failed to produce a winning record was fired after three years on the job in 2001. He moved to Alexander Central the following season. Harper, a 1982 graduate of Daniel High in South Carolina and 1988 Catawba College graduate, has spent most of his high school coaching career in the Greater Hickory area. He also coached college football at Catawba.

Photo Courtesy: Tom Harper, Alexander Central Athletics