

Delaney Signs Two-Year Contract With Griz

Written by Dave Guffey
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Take the interim tag off of Grizzly football coach Mick Delaney's official title at The University of Montana. The veteran mentor, named interim head coach in March, has signed a two-year contract to expire on Jan. 31, 2014. The contract was announced Thursday by Jean Gee, UM's interim athletic director, in a press conference in Washington-

Grizzly Stadium's Canyon Club. Delaney is now in his 46th season in the coaching profession -- 30 of those at the collegiate level. He replaced Robin Pflugrad whose contract was not renewed after serving as UM's mentor the previous two seasons (2010 and 2011). Delaney recently completed his fourth season as an assistant coach at Montana, working with the running backs, and he was also an associate head coach.

"When I think of the qualities that are needed in a head coach, I think of among other things, expertise, mentorship, leadership," said Gee, "but above all else I think of integrity. When I contemplated those qualities, there really was no question that the right thing to do for this team and all of Griz Nation was to remove the interim title and offer Mick Delaney a two-year contract. Mick brings stability to the program and leadership that will result in success for our student-athletes both on and off the field. I am confident that our football program is in good hands with Mick and his talented coaching staff and look forward to them guiding it to even greater achievements.

"This is a time to look toward a strong and vibrant future for Grizzly Athletics," said UM President Royce Engstrom. "In Mick Delaney, we have chosen a head coach who will lead us into that future. He is highly motivated himself, but he is also an exceptional motivator of others, including the players, coaches and staff around him. He understands the important role that Grizzly football plays at The University of Montana, and he has quickly earned our trust and respect. Coach Delaney will strengthen even further the grand tradition of Grizzly football, and he will work tirelessly to provide a supportive and competitive environment for our student-athletes. Under his leadership, fans should look forward to a strong and exciting season. We will do all we can to support Coach Delaney and the team. I know that Griz fans will as well."

From Butte, Mont., Delaney came to Montana from Colorado State, where he was an assistant coach for former CSU head coach Sonny Lubick for 15 seasons from 1993-2007. Former Griz head coach Bobby Hauck hired Delaney in 2008, while Pflugrad retained him as the lone official holdover from Hauck's staff. Prior to his stint at CSU, Delaney was the head football coach and athletic director at his alma mater, the University of Montana Western, in 1991 and 92. He coached on Lubick's staff at Montana State from 1979-80. He served as the athletic director at Montana Tech in Butte from 1983-85. He was an assistant football coach under former UM head coach Jack Swarhout from 1968-69. He began his coaching career in his hometown at Butte Central High School (1964-67) as head wrestling and assistant football coach.

He earned his degree in education at Montana Western in 1964. He is an inaugural inductee into the Western Montana College Sports Hall of Fame. Delaney and his wife Cheri have three children, son Mike and daughters Shauna Basile and Melissa Ossello and nine grandchildren.

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Montana travels to Kidd Brewer Stadium to play Appalachian State Saturday, September 8.