

Liberty's Patriots Football Announces New Head Coach

Alumni takes the reigns

By Matthew Stephens

Since Liberty opened 20 years ago, Coach Steve Hale has been the program's only head Football coach. Hale has been coaching for over 30 years, and after 176 wins he announced his retirement in May of 2023. After a lot of careful consideration from Liberty's Athletics Team, Mr John Sansbury is the new head coach. Hale has known Sansbury since he was 15 years old back in 2005 and actually coached him during his high school years at Liberty. He said it was a very difficult decision to leave, yet he still feels the program is moving in the right direction.

"I think coach Sansbury will focus on culture. Culture wins tough games," said the team's captain Troy Mrukoski

Sansbury is very excited for his new role and recognises the potential difficulties.

"It is a new role and I will have to learn quickly. Being the head football coach is a huge responsibility with a lot of people counting on me to lead us the right way. There are very high expectations for Liberty Football, which I love, but can be challenging. We also have an extremely difficult schedule but again, it is something I am looking forward to," Sansbury said.

"I was sad about coach Hale stepping down but I'm excited to see what coach Sansbury can do. He's good at creating relationships and I feel like we can do big things with him being the new head coach," said varsity offensive lineman Deacon Billy.

The team's culture is a very important asset to the program and both coach Hale and Sansbury say it's not going anywhere.

"The fact that I have been at Liberty for the last 14 years is my biggest strength because I know the players, I know the coaches, and I know the community," Sansbury said. "I already have a great relationship with the players and the coaches. Lastly, all of our coaches from last year are returning to coach with me this year which is a huge benefit to the program and to me as a first year head coach because we have an incredible group of coaches who care about our players and also hold them accountable to a high standard to be their best."

Many players feel positive about the change and are excited to see what it will mean for the team in the future

"I am super excited for the new opportunity and excited for coach Sansbury. We plan to keep living on the legacy coach Hale created and left for us. I can't wait to have a historic season and win the state championship," said varsity wide receiver Wilson Roberts.

Hale puts full faith in Sansbury being successful in his new position

"Change is always a challenge," Hale said. "Strength will be coach Sansbury believing in what he does, and the players believing in him. I am very excited for coach Sansbury to be getting a chance to lead the team."



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