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Wofford College. Sports Information Office

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Head Coach Mike Ayers and the Wofford College football program have announced the hiring of Bruce Johnson as the Terriers' new defensive coordinator.

Johnson replaces Tom Bryant, who resigned earlier this month in order to seek a position that would allow him to spend more time with his family. Like Bryant, Johnson will also coach the defensive backs.

A 1970 Wofford graduate and a member of the school's Athletic Hall of Fame, Johnson was a three-year starter at defensive end for the Terriers and a co-captain his senior year.

Johnson is a veteran of collegiate football. He served as the defensive line coach last season at The Citadel. He previously spent three seasons as the secondary coach at South Carolina (1996-98) and six years in the same role at North Carolina (1990-95). While with the Tar Heels, Johnson coached five defensive backs who went on to play in the NFL. In 1995, North Carolina's defensive unit led the ACC and ranked No. 6 nationally in total defense.

Johnson was the defensive coordinator for six years at Air Force (1984-89) under Falcon Head Coach and 1960 Wofford graduate Fisher DeBerry. He has also had stints at North Carolina State, Furman, Marshall, and Louisiana State.

"It's great to be back," Johnson said. "Wofford is a special place. Since I graduated, I've been thinking that I'd like to come back and contribute at some point.

"It's hard to walk around campus and not swell up with pride at what's taken place. The future is very bright here."


"The most important thing was to get the right guy in here," Ayers said. "We hated to lose Coach Bryant. He's done a great job for us.

"I wanted to make sure the next guy would have the same feel for Wofford and caring about the school. I couldn't have found anybody better. I really believe that."

The Terriers posted a 6-5 record last season, including a 5-3 Southern Conference mark that was good for fourth place in the league standings.
Defensive Coordinator Bruce Johnson of the Wofford College football team died yesterday of a heart attack while observing conditioning drills by the Terrier players.

Johnson collapsed while standing on the Snyder Field track, outside the Richardson Building, watching the Terrier players work out. Efforts to revive him failed and he was pronounced dead upon arrival at Spartanburg Regional Medical Center. Johnson had been on the job with the Terriers for just over a month.

A 1970 Wofford graduate and a member of the school’s Athletic Hall of Fame, Johnson was a three-year starter at defensive end for the Terriers and a co-captain his senior year.

“We’re in shock,” Wofford Head Coach Mike Ayers said. “He’s going to be missed and will always be a part of the Wofford family as a player and coach.

“Coming back to Wofford, he was at a place he wanted to be. He was at the point where he wanted to give back to a school he loved. He was excited about it. He talked about being here with his daughter.”

A veteran of collegiate football, Johnson served as the defensive line coach last season at The Citadel. He previously spent three seasons as the secondary coach at South Carolina (1996-98) and six years in the same role at North Carolina (1990-95). While with the Tar Heels, Johnson coached five defensive backs who went on to play in the NFL. In 1995, North Carolina’s defensive unit led the ACC and ranked No. 6 nationally in total defense.

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“This is obviously very tragic,” Wofford Athletic Director David Wood said. “He had such a positive impact on our student-athletes during the few short weeks he was with us. Everyone was excited to have him back on campus. Our hearts go out to his family and friends.”

Johnson is survived by his wife Connie and daughter Jessica. Jessica, a senior at Chapin (SC) High School, has signed to play volleyball at Wofford next year.

Funeral arrangements are being handled by Kauffman and Harmon in Lexington, SC. Plans are incomplete at this time.
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The Wofford College football program has announced the hiring of Terry Lantz as its secondary coach.

Lantz was the secondary coach at Liberty University last season. He previously served two years as the defensive coordinator and linebackers coach at Glenville State College (1997-98). He also had stints as a defensive back coach at VMI (1996), UMass (1994-95), Northeast Louisiana (1992-93), Tennessee (1991), and Louisville (1990).

“I’m very excited to become involved with the football program at Wofford,” Lantz said. “It’s a beautiful campus here with great facilities. From what I’ve been able to tell, Wofford is a great place to be.

“It’s also exciting to be in the Southern Conference and hopefully bring a championship to Wofford. I’ve noticed that the kids play hard and are really tough. My job is to help them get better every time out. They have a chance to be really good.”

A 1991 graduate of Louisville, Lantz was a four-year letterman as a defensive back for the Cardinals. He went on to earn a Master’s degree from Northeast Louisiana, now known as Louisiana-Monroe and a Wofford opponent in the season finale on Nov. 18.

“We are very excited to have Terry join our staff and the Wofford family,” Terrier Head Coach Mike Ayers said. “He’s an outstanding young coach and a good teacher who comes from a football family.

“We believe our kids will respond well to him. He will bring a lot to our program and we’re fortunate to have him.”

Lantz is the son of University of Virginia Defensive Coordinator Rick Lantz. He is married to the former Meredith Lynn Claytor.
The Wofford College football program has announced that assistant coach Nate Woody has been promoted to defensive coordinator.

Woody has served the last three seasons as the Terriers’ inside linebacker coach and recruiting coordinator.

“Coach Woody is most deserving of this increased responsibility,” Wofford Head Coach Mike Ayers said. “He’s been a member of the Wofford family since his days as a student-athlete.

“He’s an outstanding coach with a tremendous understanding of our program and Wofford. We’re very fortunate to have him on our staff and this is a reward that’s well deserved.”

Woody began his coaching career when Ayers was hired as the Terrier head coach in 1988. He worked for five years as an assistant coach before leaving in 1993 to enter private business. He then returned to the Wofford staff in 1997.

“I feel very grateful to Coach Ayers for this opportunity,” Woody said. “Wofford is home to me.

“We saw some good things with our defense during the spring and yet we know there is room for improvement. We have to get a lot better but we have the guys here who can do it.”

A 1984 graduate of Wofford, Woody was a two-time NAIA All-District selection at drop end for the Terriers. A four-year starter, he earned team Most Valuable Player honors as a senior in 1983. He also served as Team Captain and was an honorable-mention NAIA All-American his junior year. He’s a native of Anderson, SC, and a graduate of T.L. Hanna High School.

Ayers was an assistant at Wofford for three seasons (1980-82) while Woody was a student-athlete.

The defensive coordinator position became vacant when Tom Bryant resigned at the close of last season and Bruce Johnson, his replacement, suffered a fatal heart attack on Feb. 17.

Wofford completed spring practice last month and will open the 2000 season on Sept. 9 when it hosts Lehigh at Gibbs Stadium. The Terriers were 6-5 overall last year, including a 5-3 SoCon mark that was good for fourth place in the league standings after being a preseason eighth-place pick out of nine teams.
The Wofford College football program has announced that Defensive Line Coach Jack Teachey will take on the additional duty of recruiting coordinator for the Terriers.

Teachey is in his seventh year on the Wofford staff. He takes over the recruiting coordinator duties from Nate Woody, who was recently promoted to defensive coordinator.

"Coach Teachey has done an excellent job in recruiting the state of North Carolina for us," Wofford Head Coach Mike Ayers said. "He has been a valuable member of our staff and is very familiar with our program."

A native of Cherryville, NC, Teachey was a four-year letterman and three-year starter at tight end for East Tennessee State. He was the Buccaneers’ Team Captain as a senior and was an All-Southern Conference selection his junior year. He was also a three-year member of the Academic Honor Roll, graduating from ETSU in 1991.
Wofford Head Football Coach Mike Ayers will throw out the ceremonial first pitch prior to tonight's Greenville Brave game when they host the Carolina Mudcats at G-Brave Stadium.

Ayers has previously showcased his arm on the baseball diamond. He earned All-District honors as a catcher during his collegiate days at Georgetown College (KY).
The Wofford College football program has announced the signing of 13 players to National Letters-of-Intent.

"We think we've been able to get a solid class although we're still not finished," Head Coach Mike Ayers said. "There are some areas that we've got to push hard to fill.

"For the most part, our needs have been met. We've been able to increase our team speed which was a major factor for us last year in helping our team improve. We've also added some size with a couple of the defensive linemen. They are tall, rangy kids who can run and we're excited about that. We've also got some quality skill guys."

Wofford returns eight offensive starters and five on defense from this past year's squad that placed fourth in the SoCon with a 5-3 league record. Wofford was 6-5 overall while being one of just three I-AA teams to face two I-A opponents.

Listed below are Wofford's signees from today:

Name Pos. Ht. Wt. Hometown (High School)
Travis Bradex OLB 6-4 213 Columbus, NC (Polk County)
David Callaway DL 6-1 267 Charlotte, NC (Providence Day)
Shaun Fogle HB 5-10 170 Elloree, SC (Elloree)
Matt Garrett OL 6-4 266 Xenia, OH (Xenia)
Geoff Gibbon LB 5-11 205 Spartanburg, SC (Spartanburg)
J.R. McNair FB 5-10 181 Jonesboro, GA (Mount Zion)
Curtis Nash WR 6-1 170 Spartanburg, SC (Dorman)
Matt Nelson DB 6-1 198 Grove City, OH (Grove City)
John Pressley DL 6-2 235 Robbinsville, NC (Robbinsville)
Bill Pryor DL 6-3 225 Hawesville, KY (Hancock County)
Jonathan Starks TE/LS 6-1 204 Winnsboro, SC (Fairfield-Central)
Craig Thomas DB 5-10 180 Savannah, GA (Calvary Baptist)
Teddie Whitaker FS/OLB 6-2 210 Burton, SC (Battery Creek)
The Wofford College football team will begin spring practice tomorrow night at 6:30.

Under NCAA rules, the Terriers are allowed 15 practices in a 29-day period. No contact drills are permitted prior to the third practice. A total of 12 practices are allowed to have contact but only eight may involve tackling. No more than three of the 12 contact practices are allowed to have 11-on-11 scrimmages.

"We're looking forward to spring practice," Wofford Head Coach Mike Ayers said. "The kids have had a good offseason. We feel recruiting has gone well and we can't wait to get started. We've been in the office too long. We need to get on the field to work on some fundamentals and becoming a better football team."

The Terriers will dress in helmets and shorts tomorrow night. The remainder of this week's practice schedule has the Terriers working out at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday and Friday and at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday.

Wofford returns 13 starters from last year's squad that placed fourth in the Southern Conference with a 5-3 record. The Terriers were 6-5 overall.

Wofford opens the 2000 campaign when it hosts Lehigh on Sept. 9 at Gibbs Stadium.
The defense got the best of the offense in the first spring scrimmage for the Wofford College football team.

The Terriers had just one touchdown in the 94-play scrimmage that lasted nearly 90 minutes this morning at Gibbs Stadium. The lone score was a seven-yard touchdown run by fullback Tony Hudson.

"The best thing about today was that we didn't give up any cheap ones," Wofford Head Coach Mike Ayers said. "We've got to get better fundamentally. We're still pathetic on our tackling.

"Defensively, the kids are coming together. They're fitting the defense better. We just did a poor job of containing the quarterback, but some of that is due to Travis (Wilson) pulling it down and being such a threat. We've got some young kids who are playing hard."

Wilson, a rising junior, set Wofford single-season records last year for total offense (2,157 yards) and completion percentage (64.5). He ran for 936 yards while throwing for 1,221. He led the Terrier ground game this morning with 119 yards on 17 carries. His rushing numbers would have been significantly higher if not for the quick whistle placed on him during the scrimmage. He also completed 4-of-9 passes for 57 yards.

A defensive standout for the Terriers was local player Chase Corn. The Dorman High School graduate from Spartanburg had two sacks and a pass breakup from his new position of outside linebacker. The rising sophomore came to Wofford as a defensive back before being moved to fullback during preseason two-a-days.

Free safety Jeremy Scott had an interception for the defense. Other top performers on the offensive end were fullback Melvin Jones with 51 yards on 11 carries and halfback Ben Foster with 38 yards on 12 attempts. Southern Conference Freshman of the Year Jesse McCoy had five carries for 26 yards while catching one pass for 13 yards. Wide receiver Jeff Scott had three receptions for 39 yards.

The Terriers will return to the practice field on Tuesday with the next scrimmage set for next Saturday at 10 a.m.
The Wofford College football team went through a 92-play scrimmage this morning at Gibbs Stadium.

Head Coach Mike Ayers was pleased with what he saw on both sides of the ball in the Terriers’ second scrimmage of spring practice.

“There’s always a tradeoff with your offense and defense,” Ayers said. “When the offense is going well, you’re concerned with the defense. When your defense is playing well, the offense is a concern. There was a lot of give and take today.

“We saw some good and bad things but we are making progress as a football team even though we’re not still as consistent as we need to be.

“We had way too many turnovers on offense and our pass protection broke down several times. Defensively, we still have some work to do on our tackling. We did have a lot of folks flying around on that side of the ball.”

The scrimmage ended with a 31-yard fumble return for a touchdown by inside linebacker LaRay Benton. It was his first touchdown on any level of football. Benton, a rising junior from Savannah, GA, drew praise from Ayers as did fellow inside backer Robert Mathis (Cross, SC). Due to injuries, the Terriers have only three healthy players at that position.

"LaRay made some big plays for us,” Ayers said. "He and Robert really stepped up and got a lot of reps with our lack of numbers right now.”

The offense had two touchdowns in the scrimmage. Quarterback Travis Wilson (Newberry, SC) scored on a 33-yard run on the third series of the morning while halfback D.J. Gaillard (Gahanna, OH) later added a two-yard touchdown carry. Placekicker Darren Brown (Hendersonville, NC) rounded out the scoring with a 44-yard field goal.

Rising senior Tony Hudson (Rocky Point, NC), who placed second to Wilson in rushing last year with 718 yards, was the Terriers’ top ground gainer with 114 yards on 14 carries. His 42-yard run on his first carry of the morning was the Terriers’ longest play from scrimmage.

Melvin Jones (Gaston, SC) added 59 yards on 10 carries while Nathan Price (Villa Rica, GA) had 10 attempts for 51 yards and Southern Conference Freshman of the Year Jesse McCoy (Acworth, GA) rushed for 46 yards on eight carries. Wilson had 45 yards on six attempts before leaving the scrimmage with a sprained ankle. He’s listed as day-to-day.

The Terriers will have Sunday and Monday off before closing spring ball with a Tuesday practice and a Wednesday night scrimmage.
The Wofford College football team will close spring practice with a 6:30 p.m. scrimmage Wednesday night in Gibbs Stadium.

The Terriers will be without the services of standout quarterback Travis Wilson, who suffered a sprained ankle in Saturday's scrimmage. A rising junior from Newberry, SC, Wilson set a school record last fall with 2,157 yards of total offense. He rushed for 936 yards while his 1,221 passing yards represented the third-best single-season total at Wofford. He also set a Terrier mark with a 64.5 completion percentage that was just short of the Southern Conference record of 64.7 (Braniff Bonaventure, Furman, 1996).

Rising sophomores Brandon Batson (Travelers Rest, SC) and Nick Haughey (Rock Hill, SC) will share the snaps at quarterback Wednesday night. Allen Thompson, last year's No. 2 signal caller, has been utilized at wide receiver this spring.