

ROCKY NAMES ARMSTRONG BATTLIN' BEARS HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

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BILLINGS – The interim in Rocky Mountain College Battlin' Bears Head Football Coach Brian Armstrong's title has been erased. Armstrong will be guiding the football program next year, said Robert Beers, RMC athletic director.

"We may not have had the best season for the record books, but this football team, with Brian at the head, put forth a great effort. The locker room demeanor was loyal and positive, and tough losses did not lead to surrender," Beers said.

Armstrong was named interim head coach when David Reeves resigned the top-coaching job eight days before the fall practice began. Reeves accepted an assistant coaching position at Northern Arizona University.

"The growth of the team under Coach Armstrong demonstrated his knowledge of the game. He didn't lose ground this year and this team didn't flinch. I don't know of many people who would have embraced the challenge," Beers said. "He deserves the opportunity to recruit, staff and build his team. He's a keeper."

The 36-year-old Armstrong accepted the interim position in late July after serving as offensive coordinator for two seasons while he produced a nationally ranked offense.

"I was thankful for the opportunity to see the season through and I'm grateful for the chance to make my entire focus on how we can improve and close out games successfully," he said.

Under Armstrong, according to the Billings Gazette sports writer Bill Bighaus, the Battlin' Bears were not regarded as a 2-8 team.

"Around the Frontier, which is one of the NAIA's toughest football leagues, the Bears aren't being viewed as a 2-8 team, even though that's what their record says they are. They're three or four plays away from being 5-5," Bighaus wrote.

Rocky has lost two games by one point, and a total of five by eight points or less.

"One of those narrow losses was at No. 2-ranked Carroll College, which has won five NAIA championships in the last seven years. The Bears led 27-20 with six minutes to go, before the 10-time reigning league champion Saints rallied for two late TDs to pull out a 34-27 triumph," Bighaus noted.

Armstrong came to Rocky after being the head football coach at Kathleen High School in

Lakeland, Florida, where he compiled a 21-6 record in two years. In his two years, his teams won two District 10 titles and were regional finalists in 2005 and regional semi-finalists in 2006. Armstrong was also voted regional and District 10 “Coach of the Year.”

Before taking the head coaching position at Kathleen, Armstrong spent the 2003 and 2004 seasons as a graduate assistant at Utah State University working with the offensive line and special teams.

During the 2001 season Armstrong worked as an assistant coach at Lake Gibson High School in Lakeland, Florida before being named the head coach there in 2002. His Lake Gibson team went 11-3 winning the District 4A-7 championship and making it to the regional finals. For his teams efforts, Armstrong was named District 7 “Coach of the Year,” Lakeland Ledger “Coach of the Year,” and Tampa Tribune “Coach of the Year.”

Armstrong started his coaching career in 1996 at Western Montana College before moving to Morgan (Utah) High School in 1997 and then to Broadwater High School in Townsend, Mont., in 1998-99.

Armstrong played offensive line at Western Montana College from 1992-95 and was an All-American his senior year as well as a two-time all-conference selection. He also wrestled at Western Montana and his team won the national championship his sophomore year.

He is a 1992 graduate of Helena High School and earned his bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Western Montana in 1998. He then earned his Masters of Education in physical education from Utah State University in 2004.

Armstrong and his wife, Julie, have two children, Michael and Alissa.

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