

# North Carolina Central Replaces Head Football Coach

Contributed by Aaron Saunders -- Black College Wire  
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Coach Rison's era ends abruptly after a string of losses

After four years as head football coach of North Carolina Central, and a less-than-stellar 16-22 win-loss record, Mose Rison was reassigned to other duties within the athletic department.

The head coach was informed of his replacement, in a meeting with Athletic Director Ingrid Wicker-McCree and Associate Athletic Director George "Bulldog" Smith.

In an interview with the Durham Herald Sun, Rison said, "She brought me in and never really gave me a reason why, other than she wanted to go in a different direction with the football program."

Rison was hired in spring 2007 after serving as interim head coach when former head coach Rod Broadway accepted a coaching job at Grambling State University. During the 2006 season, which saw the Eagles crowned as the black college national champions, Rison was offensive coordinator and assistant head coach.

"The difference between Broadway and Rison was their leadership style," said former NCCU long snapper Oliver Jenkins. "Everybody loved Broadway. People felt like he wasn't trying to make a name for himself. He was trying to make a name for the team."

There were stirrings of a possible coaching change after back-to-back 4-7 seasons, including a 23-17 overtime loss last season to arch-rival North Carolina A&T University.

Recently NCCU students formed a Facebook group entitled "Fire Mose Rison." Still some students were shocked at the abrupt change in the middle of the season.

"I was shocked at when it happened, but not shocked that it happened," said Joseph Watkins, a second year sports management student. "Usually coaches are fired at the end of the season. For him to get fired mid-season it means he did a horrible job. Basically it means this season meant nothing to them."

This is the second time in school history that a football coach has been replaced in the middle of the season. Robert "Stone Wall" Jackson took over for Willie Smith for the last two games of the 1977 season.

"Most of us were caught off guard by the timing, but I have all the faith in the world in Dr. Wicker and Dr. Nelms," said Dennis Ellis, vice president of the Durham chapter of the Alumni Association.

In an e-mail sent to WRAL-TV, Rison expressed his sentiments about his time at NCCU.

"I leave NCCU football with the personal satisfaction that despite tall challenges in terms of infrastructure, budget and facilities, I was blessed to lead important progress with a great group of coaches and players over the past three and a half years," the e-mail read.

The former coach also listed his accomplishments, including running a squeaky-clean program that raised the cumulative team GPA from 1.9 to 2.4, as well as impressive records against rival NCAT (3-1) and homecoming opponents (3-0).

NCCU Athletic Director Ingrid Wicker-McCree released a statement that read, "While we appreciate the passion and commitment that Coach Rison has shown, we feel at this time that a change in the leadership and command of our football program is needed."

The new direction will be set by former offensive line coach Darryl Bullock, who was announced as the interim head coach.

Bullock wasted no time making changes, announcing via e-mail that wide receiver coach Kwame Dixon also would assume quarterback coaching duties.

"We are going to practice fast," Bullock said during the weekly MEAC Teleconference. "This should get our guys more reps and should make us more prepared for games."

There also were changes on the defensive side of the ball as outside linebacker coach Gilbert Wiggins was promoted to defensive coordinator. Former coordinator and defensive back coach Jake Cabell was assigned to handle defensive back duties only.

According to Wicker-McCree, the process to hire the next football coach will begin immediately.

"I would like to be considered for the permanent job," Bullock said. "This is a five-game audition for me and the team."

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