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Will Beverina | [wbeverina@radford.edu](mailto:wbeverina@radford.edu)

Bryheem Hancock has been hired as the eighth head coach in Radford men's soccer's history, Radford University Director of Athletics Robert Lineburg announced on March 28. The former University of South Florida assistant replaces former Radford Head Coach Marc Reeves, who announced his resignation on Feb. 22 to take the head coaching job at Elon University.

"I was excited to be able to accept the job at Radford," Hancock told *The Tartan*. "After meeting the players, staff and President [Brian] Hemphill, I felt it was a great fit."

It is Hancock's first job as a head coach after serving for eight years as an assistant at South Florida. It was there he earned a reputation as one of the country's top recruiters, helping the Bulls to the number three recruiting class in the nation in 2015, as ranked by *College Soccer News*. He feels his time as an assistant has helped him prepare for the new challenge of leading a program.

"I was fortunate enough to be hired by George Kiefer, who was the head coach at South Florida my first few years," said Hancock. "He allowed me to step up and take on responsibility within the first couple years I was there. That experience is going to help me."

Hancock inherits a program that currently holds the Big South regular season and tournament titles and has gone to the last two NCAA tournaments. Though key seniors were lost last fall, including All-American center back Jo Vetle Rimstad and record-setting goalkeeper Aitor Pouseu Blanco, Hancock expects more of the same in his first season.

"I talked to the players and have already told them I want to do the same things they've been doing," Hancock asserted. "We're going to focus on the conference and we're going to go even further in the NCAA tournament than they've been before."

Hancock has college and professional soccer playing experience as the former goalkeeper for the University of Connecticut and various professional teams. During his time with the Huskies in front of the net, he went to two final fours and won the NCAA tournament in 2000 while being

named to the All-Tournament team that same year. He was later named the Big East goalkeeper of the year in his senior year in 2001. He was drafted by the Los Angeles Galaxy of Major League Soccer after he graduated and went on to play for the Atlanta Silverbacks and Toronto Lynx, making a combined 60 appearances professionally.

For Hancock, one of the most important aspects of his decision was the community work and academics of the players. He felt Radford's program fit the bill. "I want players with a good head on their shoulder who are as dedicated in the classroom as they are on the field," said Hancock. "When I looked at the players that Radford University has and the kind of students they are, I knew it was a good choice."

The months leading up to the 2017 fall season will be busy, but Hancock has already started working. He wants to be heavily involved in the recruiting process and is focusing on bringing in a strong 2018 class. "I want two-way soccer players," said Hancock. "I'm looking to bring in guys with high soccer IQ, and I'm looking to bring in guys with character."

Although it's his team now, Hancock will look to build on some of the things the Highlanders have done well recently.

"Marc Reeves did a tremendous job with this team," Hancock complimented. "They have been the toughest defense in the Big South for a long time and have been up there nationally as well. That's something every coach looks to do and that's something I'm going to look to do."

The end of spring and upcoming summer will also give him time to evaluate the squad and get a look at the new recruits the program brought in after the end of last season. After that, it will be time for the real thing.

"I can't wait to see what this team can do," Hancock concluded. "When I got to visit the campus and the people, Radford felt like a family. That's something I want to be a part of."