

ALBANY CONQUEST HEAD COACH RICK BUFFINGTON

by Jenn Eastman



"COACH BUFF"

Rick Buffington, better known as "Coach Buff", was named Head Coach of the Albany Conquest on May 10. He made his return to the Pepsi Arena May 22nd guiding the Conquest to victory over the Macon Knights. The win was their third straight victory, and second under Buffington. He has been a part of the arena football family for 17 years, coaching for various teams all over the nation including the Albany Firebirds from 1990-1993, and he led them to the playoffs three of four seasons. He was a part-time scout for the New York Jets in 1976. He joined the New England Patriot coaching staff from 1978-1981 as Defensive Backs Coach where he worked with Bill Parcells, who at the time was an aspiring young assistant as a Linebackers Coach.

Jennifer Eastmann sat down with Coach Buff as he shared some personal stories of his many years in and around the world of football.

Q: *What is the greatest achievement of your football career?*

A: I think my greatest achievement was in 1998 when I was coaching the Florida Bobcats. There was a 7-year-old boy, Lamar Mackey, who was dying of cancer and his wish was to meet a Bobcat player. I heard about this and I grabbed a couple players and we went to visit him in the hospital. We all kneeled around his bed and said the lord's prayer and for that moment we really made him feel like he was a part of the team and apart of the process involved in being with the team.

Q: *What was it like to work alongside coaches such as Bill Parcells, Chuck Fairbanks and Raymond Berry?*

A: We were very close when we worked for the New England Patriots and we would still have to do bed checks. Bill was very superstitious and he never wanted to do it, so he used to pay me \$30 to do his. It was really great to work with all of those guys. I was just out of my league to be in meetings with them.

Q: *What is the best coaching tip you've learned from working with numerous legendary coaches?*

A: The best tip I ever got was getting involved with the scouting department. Learning to get involved with the scouting process really made a difference in coaching for me. It taught me to be a better coach.

Q: *How has your extensive scouting experience improved your coaching abilities?*

A: As a result of the substitution rules in arena football, scouting has made it easier to put the right players

on the field for the best offensive line and the best defensive line.

Q: *Where does your interest in football stem from?*

A: When I was 14 years old, my friends all wanted to go play golf and I didn't have the money to play, but I didn't want to tell them that. My girlfriend's brother, who played on the football team, told me that tryouts were starting the next day. I needed an excuse to skip the round of golf with my friends so I decided to go to the tryouts. It ended up changing my life. The irony of it is that now, doctors, lawyers and CEO's are always inviting me to play golf for free.

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Q: *Who has had the most important influence on your life?*

A: Initially, my high school coach, Don Montle. He really believed in me and pushed me because I was small for a football player. Later on, Babe Parilli had a huge influence on me because he was the one who really believed that I should go somewhere in this business. Babe Parilli was a legend in this sport. Back in the 1960's, he was the quarterback for the New England Patriots and the back-up quarterback for Joe Namath in the Superbowl.



COACH BUFF AND HIS QB BRYANT

Q: *What is your strategy for success for the Conquest?*

A: My strategy is just to raise the motivational limit. I want to teach them that they can be winners first.

Q: *When you aren't coaching, what do you do for fun?*

A: Golf, Golf and more Golf.

Q: *What impact has your wife, Susan had on your success?*

A: Susan has had a huge impact because she's been there for so much of it. I could never have done all this and have what I have without her.

Q: *What do you want to tell the fans of the Albany Conquest?*

A: I just hope a lot more people will come out and enjoy the arena football performance with us.



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CONQUEST CANCEL JULY 23 BON JOVI PERFORMANCE

The Albany Conquest announced that circumstances have caused them to cancel the previously scheduled July 23rd Bon Jovi performance at the Pepsi Arena even though Bon Jovi was prepared to perform on that date.

The Conquest also announced that anyone who purchased a Pick 4 Package, a special game ticket for the July 23rd performance or a full or partial season ticket after April 14th 2004, the day the Conquest announced the Bon Jovi Performance, will be entitled to a full refund or a partial credit at the purchaser's option.

Fans seeking a refund are asked to please return their unused Conquest /Bon Jovi tickets to the point of purchase prior to July 23. A partial refund will be offered to those who remain season ticket holders or attend the July 23rd game. Details regarding partial refunds will be provided at a later date.

Out of town tickets holders who purchased tickets thru the Pepsi Arena Box Office, can mail in a request for refunds which must also be postmarked by July 23rd. Please send requests to the Albany Conquest, Pepsi Arena Box Office, 51 South Pearl Street, Albany, New York 12207. All those seeking refunds must return tickets to point of purchase prior to July 23rd at 5:00 P. M. There will be no refunds issued after the July 23rd deadline. For more information go to albanyconquest.com or call the Albany Conquest at 518 487 2222.

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