



NEWS

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El Camino College Football Coach John Featherstone to Retire
Iconic Coach Spent More Than 30 Years Leading Successful Warrior Football Program

Longtime El Camino College football head coach John Featherstone recently announced plans to retire at the end of the 2015 season. All community members, alumni, and former student-athletes are invited to celebrate with the renowned coach at the last regular season game against Long Beach City College, scheduled for 5 p.m. Nov. 14 at Redondo Union High School's Sea Hawk Stadium. Featherstone's more than three decades of contributions to El Camino College football will be recognized during a special halftime celebration.

A legend in community college football and now in his 31st season at ECC, Featherstone has the highest winning percentage of any active coach in the Southern Section of California, which includes 37 community colleges from Bakersfield to San Diego. Going into the 2015 season, Featherstone's overall record was 211-112-1.

A South Bay native, Featherstone's affiliation with the El Camino College football program began as a student-athlete (1967-1968), and includes his ECC coaching career, which began in 1985. Since then, he has continued the Warrior football program's long tradition of producing scholar-athletes who have continued on at universities; with some making their way into the professional ranks.

"I am proud to have known Coach Featherstone since our elementary school days when I had to attempt to tackle him on the playgrounds of Manhattan Beach," said Bill Beverly, president of the El Camino Community College District Board of Trustees. "He has touched thousands of lives and presided over the building of innumerable young players into better students, athletes and men. John represents all that is best of El Camino College."

Featherstone coached the Warriors to a National Championship in 1987, in addition to making three national championship game appearances. His team also won two state championships, 11 conference championships, and appeared in 19 bowl games. Five consecutive Southern California playoff appearances were made from 2004-08 and the team has 21 nationally ranked finishes, including seven straight from 2003-09.

In addition, Featherstone won the Mission Conference Coach of the Year Award and the National Coach of the Year Award twice; he is an eight-time California State Coach of the Year Award recipient; and was inducted into the El Camino College Athletic Hall of Fame in 2005. That same year he was honored by the American Football Coaches Association as a convention keynote speaker.

Featherstone's coaching extends beyond the gridiron. He is known for his guidance in developing healthy, confident, and successful student-athletes. He can be heard constantly reminding his players to keep their grades up, do the right thing, and take care of themselves. Featherstone's influence as a community leader is far-reaching, with numerous athletes, students, alumni, colleagues and friends all over the country who support his work and dedication to football and El Camino College.

Before joining the El Camino College football program as head coach, Featherstone took his first coaching position at San Diego State University in 1971, where one of his first protégés, Isaac Curtis, went on to become a Pro Bowl receiver for the Cincinnati Bengals. Featherstone then coached quarterbacks and wide receivers at Grossmont College for four years, helping the Griffins win a state title in 1974.

In 1975, Featherstone replaced former NFL head coach Mike Martz of the St. Louis Rams at San Diego Mesa College, working as the team's offensive coordinator. During his two years at Mesa, he led the team to back-to-back conference titles. He also tutored future SDSU All-American quarterback Matt Kofler, who later became the San Diego Mesa head coach. He returned to San Diego State in 1980, where he worked with the legendary Claude Gilbert and future NFL coaches Doug Scovil and Brian Billick. Featherstone then joined the UC Berkeley football coaching staff in 1982, returning to Southern California one year later to take the position of offensive coordinator at Santa Ana College. Two years later he was named head football coach at El Camino College, replacing NFL assistant Jack Reilly.

Featherstone was also a standout athlete, first recognized for his offensive prowess as a quarterback, running back and wide receiver at Mira Costa High School in Manhattan Beach, earning All-CIF honors as a wide receiver for the Mustangs in 1967. He also prepped in track and field, baseball, and volleyball.

From there, Featherstone played two years of football at El Camino College, earning all-conference honors and receiving a scholarship to play at San Diego State University. He made an immediate impact in his junior year, leading the Aztecs to a win in the 1969 Pasadena Bowl before 52,000 fans. Named Most Valuable Player of the game, it was his pair of touchdowns that led the Aztecs to a record of 11-0 on the season and a 12th place finish in the National AP Poll.

Featherstone earned a bachelor's degree in journalism with a minor in physical education in 1970 and a master's degree in physical education in 1973, both from San Diego State University. Featherstone's commitment to education extends to helping numerous players secure scholarships each year to continue their academic and athletic endeavors at the university level.

He has coached more than three dozen players into professional football including: Keith Ellison (LB, Buffalo Bills), DeLawrence Grant (DE, Oakland Raiders), Antonio Chatman (WR, Cincinnati Bengals), Marcel Reece (FB, Oakland Raiders, active), and Derrick Deese (OL, San Francisco 49ers). Countless former students are All-American athletes and have transferred to universities to continue their education and play football.

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