

COURTNEY



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“He set an example with his players and his program,”


~ **Ted Gatewood, Head Coach**
Ex-Ooltewah coach now at Red Bank in Chattanooga



Eddie Courtney

**Admirals skipper from 1996 through 2023
while Coaching and Teaching at
FHS for 45 years**

- 204 career Head Coaching Wins (fifth most all-time among active head coaches through 2023)
- Inducted into Tennessee Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2021
- Led his Admirals to the 2016 Division I Class 5A State Championship (14-1 final record)
 - A four-time Region Coach of the Year
- Led his Admirals to Five Consecutive State playoff Quarterfinal appearances (2005 through 2009)
 - Was honored with the 2017 Pat Summitt Ignite Greatness Award
 - Was honored with the 2006 Knoxville News Sentinel Courage Award
- Coached 47 All-state honorees and three All-Americans, including six Mr. Football Finalists (statewide)
- Of the more than 200 Admirals he coached who earned college football scholarships, six have played in the NFL



End of an Era

After 28 years as Admirals skipper at the helm of Farragut High School varsity football — and 45 years coaching and teaching at FHS — Eddie Courtney captured a state title amongst his 204 career wins, which was fifth most among active head coaches as of 2023.

A four-time Region Coach of the Year, Courtney then earned the highest honor for football coaching success in the state: he was inducted into the Tennessee Football Coaches Association Hall of

Fame in 2021.

And yet for all of this “on the field” success, Courtney perfectly fits the “outstanding coach, but even a better person” profile, as this two-time cancer survivor is highly popular for living out his Christian principles of life.

Soon after announcing his retirement from coaching and teaching at FHS Wednesday, March 6, Courtney said about the reaction among fellow coaches, ex-players and others who have contacted him to extend their congratulations on an outstanding career, “The number of phone calls, text, players who’ve come by school in the last few weeks, it was unreal. ... Fifty or more texts a day, or phone calls.

“I’ve been truly blessed.”

Courtney’s career was praised on the floor of Tennessee General Assembly recently, as state Rep. Jason Zachary (R-District 14, which includes Farragut) presented House Resolution 109, which listed the coach’s many career accomplishments.

HIGHLY RESPECTED

Eddie's peers ...

“We’ve been competing against each other for a long time,” Bradley Central head coach Damon Floyd said of Eddie Courtney. “Honestly, I would say Farragut’s probably a program I respect as much as any in the state. He’s a guy that’s always had his teams obviously really well-prepared. They were always well-coached,” he added. “They were physical. You just knew that he respected the game, the way his kids came out and performed every Friday night, year after year after year. Here at Bradley Center, we have the utmost respect for coach Courtney.”

“Coach Courtney, obviously, is competitive, but I think coach Courtney really was a role model as in how to coach, how to be a successful football coach, because he did it with character, he did it with class,” said former Ooltewah head coach Ted Gatewood, who now is leading the program at Red Bank in Chattanooga. “I consider him a friend. I consider him a mentor.

“He set an example with his players and his program. You look at his longevity and being at one place, you don’t see very much anymore,” Gatewood added. “His loyalty to the program, the school and the community was very evident and paramount. But the thing about it is you always knew when you played against coach Courtney, they were going to be fundamentally sound and they were going to be physical and they would get after it.”

“A class act — I don’t know if I’ve run across a better person in my 48 years of coaching,” said Joe Gaddis, former football head coach at Oak Ridge whose Wildcats won the 1991 TSSAA Class AAA (largest at the time) state championship.

“He’s one heck of a coach — I think he’s every bit as good a coach as he is a person,” Gaddis added. “Any success he has is well-deserved. He runs a top-notch program over there, and he’s done it for a while.

“Always well-prepared; they do things right over there.”

High PRAISE ...

“Donald Dodgen, FHS athletic director, was hired as Farragut varsity boys basketball head coach in 1996, the same year Eddie Courtney took over the Admirals football program.

“I don’t have enough words to express the feelings I have for coach Eddie Courtney,” Dodgen said. “He is just an outstanding gentleman, plus an outstanding football coach. The winningest football coach at Farragut High School, by far.

“But he’s not only a coach and a gentleman, he is a great teacher (see story, page 20),” the AD added. “One of the best teachers at Farragut High School. He got a Teacher of the Year Award (2021) for his job in the classroom.

“He’s been good for the community, he’s been good for this school and he’s been really good for these kids. Look how many kids he’s had through this program through the years.”

About Dodgen’s relationship with Courtney, “he and I have worked together for 28 years now — he and I came in as (head) coaches together in ’96,” he said. “That’s together, not separate — our relationship was really great between football and basketball. And I have been fortunate enough to be the athletic director here working with him. It’s just been a great marriage with us. He’s such an easy person to work with.

“He’s here early in the morning and late at night, and he’s always here for the kids,” Dodgen added.

Doucette, ‘beyond football’

For the last 24 seasons, assistant coach Tom Doucette — weight lifting coordinator and defensive line coach — has worked under Eddie Courtney at FHS.

With Courtney, “football is important, but it’s more than just about football — it’s about making these boys into men,” Doucette said. “Coach Courtney started a program, ‘BAM: Be a Man.’ Knox County has a program, ‘Boys to Men,’ and he took that and kind of worked that around the stuff that we do in our program here.

“Everything is based around family and football, and it all works together,” he added.

“It was something I connected with as far as loving the game of football.”

Love of the Game

As for making a career out of football, “I just always enjoyed it,” Eddie Courtney said. “It was something I connected with as far as loving the game of football. I wanted to play it.”

As a ninth-grader at Whittle Spring Jr. High in 1967, “At that time, it’s something that my parents (Paul and Juanita Courtney) and everybody supported me to do — to find something I really wanted to do,” the coach said. “And I just enjoyed being around all the teammates I had through the years, and the coaches and stuff, just having the camaraderie to do that.”

An All-Knox County linebacker and center with the Fulton Falcons through the 1970 season, Courtney accepted a scholarship to Mars Hill University (North Carolina), where he was a standout linebacker through his junior season before a vehicular accident ended his playing career.

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Eddie Courtney

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better people

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TENNESSEE

Photo by Carlos Reveiz

“I got a chance, but I worked hard at it. I tried to get to know everybody I could in the coaching business.”

From Participant to Coach

About Eddie Courtney taking the game from participation to coaching, “just the film part of it; I liked studying the game — and had a real good (linebackers) coach (at Mars Hill) Bill Mitchell, who just encouraged me, and (MHU head coach Claude “Hoot”) Gibson, they were the ones that said, ‘Well, you’re going to finish up your degree, and you’re going to start being a student assistant,’” Courtney recalled. “And that’s how I really got into coaching.”

A graduate assistant coach at Mars Hill through spring of 1974, Courtney got a similar position at East Tennessee State University (where he earned a Masters of Science degree) from the summer of 1974 through spring 1976.

The now Farragut legend then made a big move to Rocky Top, becoming a grad assistant coach for then head coach Bill Battle’s Tennessee Vols beginning in the fall of 1976 (pictured kneeling, left). He stayed through Johnny Majors’ first spring practice on The Hill in 1977.

“Well, I knew that you just had to have some breaks to advance, and I did,” Courtney said. “I got a chance, but I worked hard at it. I tried to get to know everybody I could in the coaching business. I went to multiple clinics and also would go and visit other staffs, other places, just to learn the game.”

Comparing Battle and Majors, “Well, there were two different styles,” the coach said. “Coach Battle was—I think the best way to describe it—he was very organized, detailed. He was young; I guess he was 30-something when I was there with him.

“So he was young, energetic, whereas coach Major is a little older, and he already had his system, the way he did things,” Courtney added.



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Time for Farragut

Yet another special coach in Eddie Courtney's life stepped forward, encouraging him to coach and teach at Farragut High School. That would begin with the 1977 football season.

"I knew coach (Ken) Sparks for a couple of years before at FCA and other places," Courtney said about what became one of the nation's top small college football coaches. "And when he got that job, he called me, and wondered if I'd be interested. At the time ... I was taking some visits and interviewing for some college jobs. And then coach Sparks just shared his vision, what he thought Farragut could be."

Courtney recalled thinking, "well, let's try and be stable and see what I can do" at Farragut. "And, of course, those first three years (1977 through 1979 seasons), it was incredible what we did at Farragut."

As linebackers coach during that span, Courtney left FHS after the '79 season when Sparks left to be head coach at Carson-Newman College.

Two years as defensive coordinator at Halls

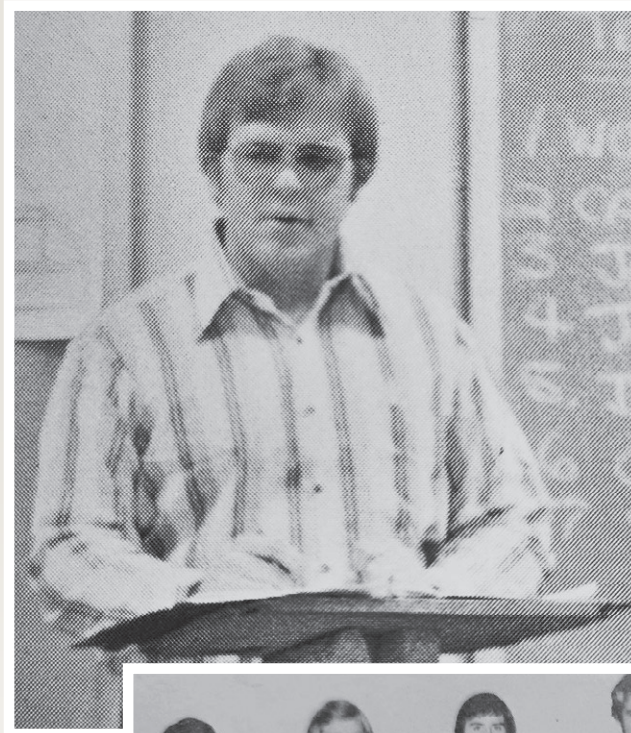
High School — under head coach Bruce Lussier, a former Admirals assistant — Courtney returned to Farragut for the 1982 season in the same coordinator role.

"I had two good years at Halls, no problem there — but I just missed some things at Farragut that I thought would give me a little bit more flexibility to do things the way I wanted to do it," Courtney said. "And I had a chance to come back," serving under FHS head coach Dan Bland.

"Coach Bland, his style was more the hard-nosed, direct approach: physical football, as far as just running the football, and playing great defense," Courtney said. "Coach Sparks, on the other hand, he had everything planned out every day, year-round. It was so organized, from that standpoint, and really just promoting the program and having a vision."

Then, from 1987 through 1995, Courtney coached under Buddy Fisher.

"Coach Fisher, his background was at UT ...," Courtney said. "And he taught me the lesson of: 'don't worry about things you have no control over. Just spend your attention on your program and your kids and those things, and don't get so carried away with all this other stuff.'"



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Time to Lead the Admirals

About getting his opportunity to lead the Admirals program beginning in 1996, “Well, I was excited; I knew that I could do it,” Eddie Courtney said. “Well, let’s put it this way: I paid my dues, but at the same time I enjoyed being a defensive coordinator.

“But I think at that time, I said, ‘I want a little bit more of a challenge,’” he added. “I’d love to be the head coach,’ and I think I was prepared.

“Coach (Buddy) Fisher allowed me, in his last couple of years, to do more and more as far as the program was concerned, to prepare me to be a head coach.”

About the difference in being a head coach versus an assistant, “until you sit in that chair, you don’t understand,” Courtney said. “Everything’s on you, that’s the way I looked at it. And I’d always put time into it.

“But I learned when you become head coach, you need to be the first one there and the last one to leave,” he added. “And that’s the way I approached it. Taking things from all those men, whether it’s coach (Bill) Battle (at Tennessee, as a grad assistant in 1976) or coach (“Hoot”) Gibson (his head coach while playing in college at Mars Hill), or all those other guys — and all the guys I played under and got to be around — I took what I thought was the best of them, but I still had to be myself.”



Thanks, Coach
for all your years at FHS!
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and community well.



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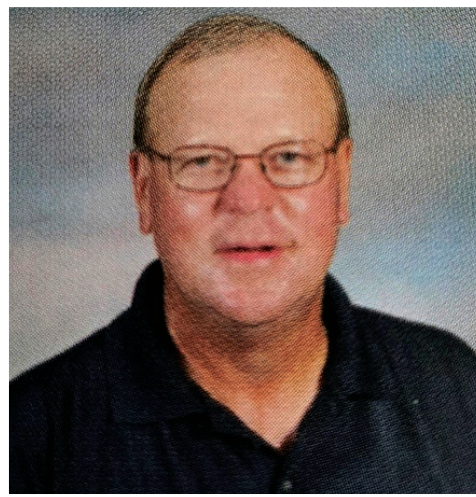
Though losing his first five games, Eddie Courtney's first head-coaching win in 1996 was a 16-13 triumph in Athens versus McMinn County.

"We were a young, inexperienced team," he said. "...I was just glad to see the kids' excitement and the hard work paying off."

In Courtney's ninth season, 2004, an upset victory on the road against then East Tennessee powerhouse Ooltewah, 10-7, highlighted a 9-3 season — his best to date.

Things only improved through 2009, as Farragut reached the TSSAA state playoff quarterfinals five consecutive seasons.

During that time, Courtney became the all-time winningest coach in program history, collecting his 88th triumph late in the 2008 season and his 100th win late in the 2009 campaign.



“...I was just glad to see the kids' excitement and the hard work paying off.”

Wishing Coach Courtney success on his next adventure



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“‘We didn’t come down here just to play. We came down here to win, guys,’”

~ Eddie Courtney



‘No-Quit’

Attitude helps garner state title

Winning the TSSAA Class 5A state championship in 2016 (14-1 final record) certainly took a “no-quit” attitude.

Perhaps unprecedented either in TSSAA playoff or NFL playoff history, Farragut twice overcame 28-point deficits to win during its playoff run: trail-

ing Ooltewah 42-14 three minutes into the third quarter before rallying to force overtime, then using a goal-line stand in double overtime to win 56-49.

Then in the 5A state title game in Cookeville versus unbeaten and defending 5A state champ Independence, the Admirals trailed 35-7 late in the second quarter before going on a 38-0 run to rally and capturing gold in Tennessee Tech’s Tucker Stadium, winning the crown 45-35.

“Well, for those players, especially, that was the personality they took on all year,” Courtney said about the “no-quit” attitude. “They were very unselfish. The quarterback, Adam Fulton, always played with a chip on his shoulder, wanted to prove that to people. ... They believed we could do it. And I had very few discipline issues at all with that team.”

Though Courtney knows the game inside and out, “I felt like he was good at keeping things simple enough to where we could go out there and play fast,” Fulton said.

“I remember at halftime at the state championship game, I told them, I said, ‘We didn’t come down here just to play. We came down here to win, guys. We know we can,’” Courtney recalled. “And I told them, I said, ‘The thing we’ve got to do is we have to score. They’re going to kick off to us, and we’ve got to score on that drive. And the defense has got to hold.’”

“Well, that happened ... and we just kept playing hard, making plays,” Courtney added. “And the momentum went our way. And as far as Independence, I thought they lost a little composure, and the kids just kept on going.”

“I remember watching the state championship; I mean, as soon as he had it, I wanted to text him because when guys do it right, and you see them get rewarded like that, it was just special for the whole deal to see that happen,” Johnson City Science Hill head coach Stacy Carter said.




SUCCESS vs. RIVALS

Against the program's top two rivals, Eddie Courtney enjoyed lots of success as head coach.

His career record against archival Bearden was 24-8 — having won 22 or 25 games against the Bulldogs in one stretch from 2002 through 2022, including a 3-1 mark in playoff games.

Struggling against rival Oak Ridge during his first 10 seasons, Courtney turned things around beginning in 2006 and went 13-5 from that point forward against one of the state's top programs historically.





“And I felt also I was trying to instill that into these young men, about all the accountability and commitment ...”

The Eddie Way

In addition to an in-depth knowledge of the game, coaching success has a lot to do “about people, about making sure you can connect with people,” Eddie Courtney said. “And as the society has changed, I’m still old school about things; have a mindset of discipline, toughness, accountability.

“I’ve just had to find ways to relate that message to a younger generation in a different type of society and still not give up on the principles, things I believe in,” he added. “And I felt also I was trying to instill that into these young men, about all the accountability and commitment and things, and just trying to do it right and give them a chance to grow and get better.”



COURTNEY

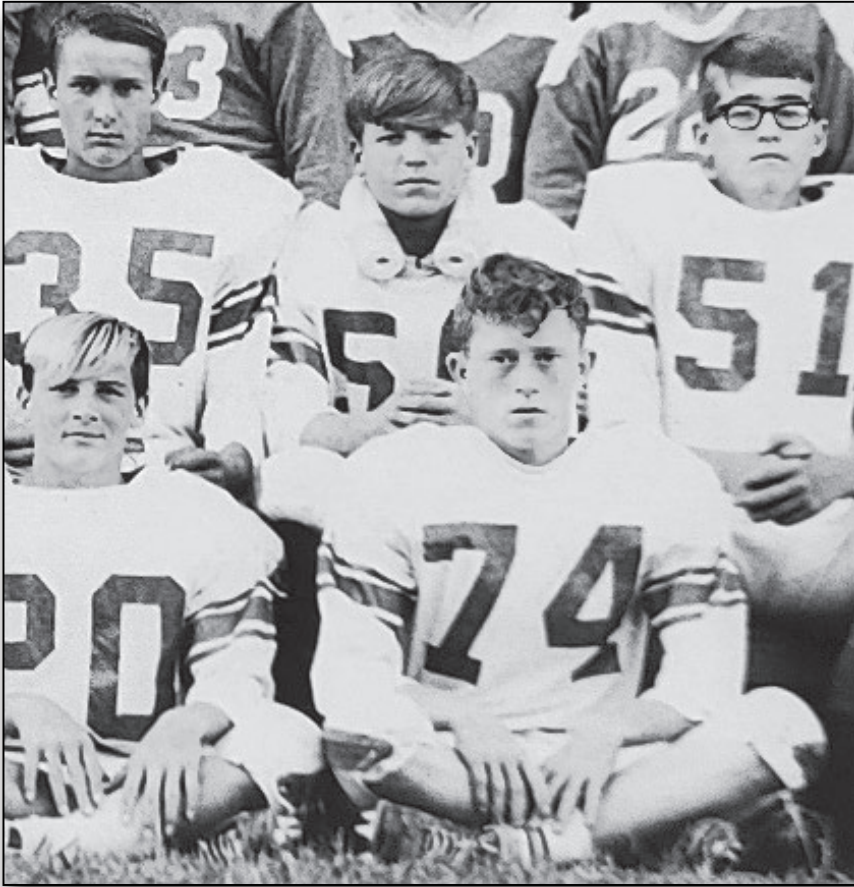
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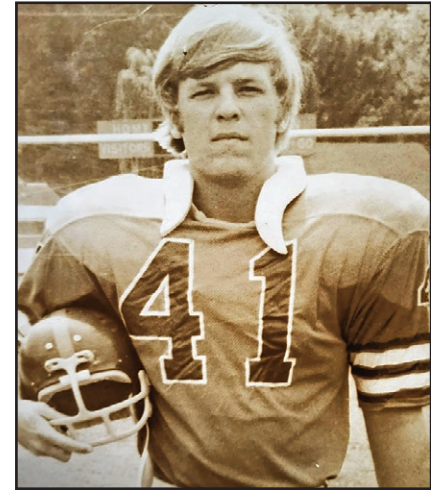


1967



Eddie Courtney (middle, second row) was a key member of Whittle Springs Junior High's ninth-grade team that finished as Knoxville City Champs in 1967 with a perfect 8-0 mark.

1968-1970



Eddie Courtney was an All-County linebacker and center for the Fulton Falcons (Class of 1971).

1971-1973



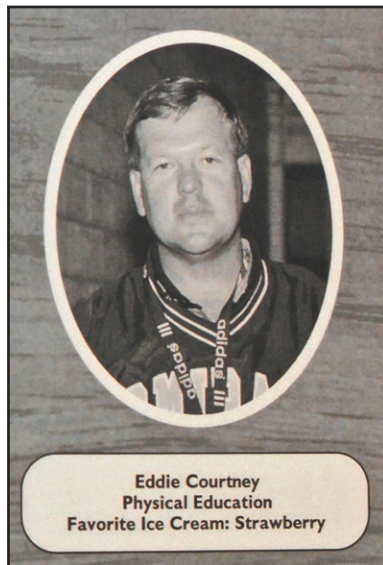
A standout linebacker at Mars Hill University (North Carolina) from 1971 through 1973, Eddie Courtney's playing career ended following a vehicular accident after his junior season.

1977-1995

1974-1977



Eddie Courtney, kneeling far left, as a graduate assistant coach on head coach Bill Battle's 1976 Tennessee Vols staff, and the next spring with then new head coach Johnny Majors. Previous to this, he served as a grad assistant coach at his alma mater, Mars Hill (Class of 1975), and at East Tennessee State, where Courtney earned a Masters of Science degree.



1996-2005



During his first 10 years as Admirals skipper, Eddie Courtney's first win was 16-13 versus McMinn County in 1996. That span concluded with the final year of coaching his son, standout receiver/defensive back Geoff Courtney, in 2005.

Invited by football coaching legend Ken Sparks to join his FHS staff in 1977, Eddie Courtney started out as linebackers coach, then worked his way up to becoming defensive coordinator as an Admirals assistant through the 1995 season.

2005-2009

2017

2016 State Champs



From 2005 through 2009, Eddie Courtney used family support to help led Farragut football to five consecutive TSSAA state quarterfinal playoff appearances. Meanwhile, he broke the record for coaching program victories (88) in 2008, then won his 100th game in 2009.



Surrounded by his happy Admirals, Eddie Courtney celebrated on the field after winning the 2016 Division I Class 5A state championship



Eddie Courtney speaks to fellow Tennessee Football Coaches Association members and Hall of Fame inductees upon his Induction into Tn-FCA's Hall of Fame in 2021.

2022


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2021 Hall of Fame



Alongside his wife, Anita Courtney, Eddie Courtney is shown with the plaque indicating his induction into Tennessee Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2021.



In 2022, Eddie Courtney picked up his 200th win as FHS head coach while also his 24st victory against archival Bearden, finishing 24-8 against the Bulldogs — including 3-1 in playoffs — in 28 seasons.



Our residents
& staff wish
Coach Courtney
the best and thank him
for giving so much
to so many in our
community.

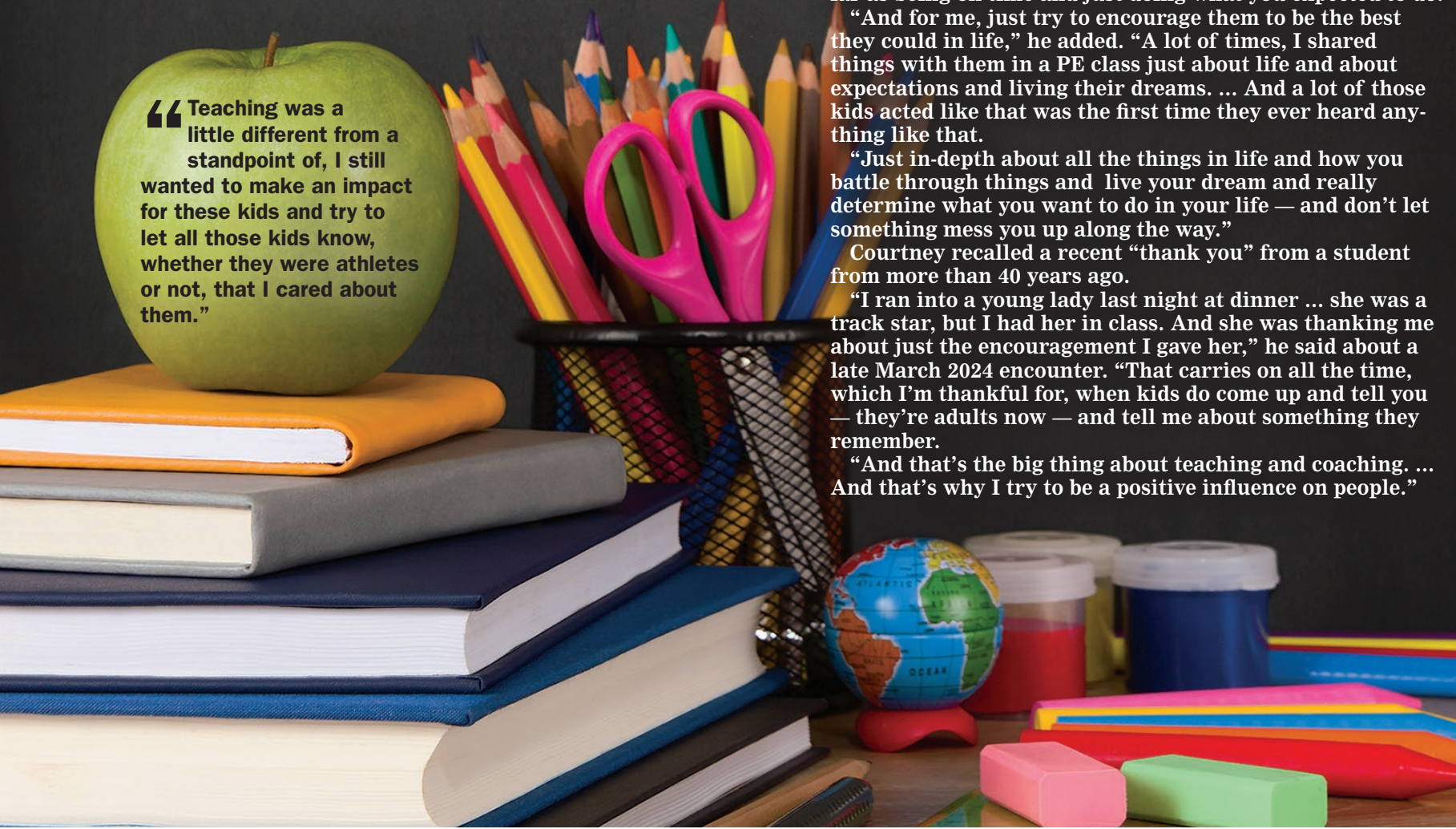
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Courtney the Teacher



“Teaching was a little different from a standpoint of, I still wanted to make an impact for these kids and try to let all those kids know, whether they were athletes or not, that I cared about them.”

Though having occasionally taught health, psychology and one year of driver's education, Eddie Courtney, 70, has mainly served as a physical education teacher at Farragut High School.

“Teaching was a little different from a standpoint of, I still wanted to make an impact for these kids and try to let all those kids know, whether they were athletes or not, that I cared about them,” Courtney said. “I tried to put a lot of the same principles in my class that I did with football as far as being on time and just doing what you expected to do.

“And for me, just try to encourage them to be the best they could in life,” he added. “A lot of times, I shared things with them in a PE class just about life and about expectations and living their dreams. ... And a lot of those kids acted like that was the first time they ever heard anything like that.

“Just in-depth about all the things in life and how you battle through things and live your dream and really determine what you want to do in your life — and don't let something mess you up along the way.”

Courtney recalled a recent “thank you” from a student from more than 40 years ago.

“I ran into a young lady last night at dinner ... she was a track star, but I had her in class. And she was thanking me about just the encouragement I gave her,” he said about a late March 2024 encounter. “That carries on all the time, which I'm thankful for, when kids do come up and tell you — they're adults now — and tell me about something they remember.

“And that's the big thing about teaching and coaching. ... And that's why I try to be a positive influence on people.”

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“ Well, I couldn’t have done this without her and her support.”

Backbone of Anita

About the love and support of his wife, Anita Courtney, “Well, I couldn’t have done this without her and her support,” he said.

As a registered nurse, “Sometimes she got to work the late shift, and she was committed to her job,” the coach said. “And I tried to support her and her career.”

On the other hand, “From all the times I’ve been gone from home, she’s had to learn to do things around the house a lot,” Courtney said. “And then just her love and support that she’s given, with me being gone so much time, has been so critical.”



Coach Eddie Courtney has been a great football coach and teacher at Farragut High School for over 44 years.

Coach Courtney has been the leader for the school and the young men and students for hundreds of football victories and led through losses as well. But his greatest contribution has been to teach the young men and students and the Farragut community what courage, class and character look like.

We salute this fine leader and man and thank him.

~ Doug and Brenda Horne



Megan Courtney, far right, daughter of Eddie Courtney, right, stand between Eddie's wife and Megan's mom, Anita Courtney, alongside the family of Eddie's son, Geoff Courtney. Geoff's wife, Taylor, holds their daughter, Charley, 3.

Dad's No. 1 Fan

Father & daughter find bond over the game

Eddie Courtney's daughter, Megan Courtney, "is probably my No. 1 fan," he said.

Being around so many FHS players, coaches and staff, "She's always said many a time that she felt like sometimes she had a lot of brothers because, again, it's those experiences," he added.

However, with demands on his time with football and teaching, "I gave up a lot of time where I was not around her," he confessed. "Even though she was a student at Farragut High School, still, it was tough. I was a football coach. I had so much going on.

"We've connected much better now ... and we're trying to do some things today that we didn't do earlier. And that was my only regret. ... Sometimes I didn't realize what I was doing it," being away from Megan and the family a lot, "but she'd always say, 'No, it's Ok.'"

Recently speaking at a University of Tennessee football clinic, "I said, 'Now, as I close, remember, your family comes first. ... And I shared my experience with Megan. ... And I said, 'All you guys who've got daughters, make sure you don't neglect them. And don't neglect your wife.'"

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Battling Cancer



In April of 2005, “what I remember there is that, really, I thought I was having a heart attack,” Eddie Courtney recalled about being diagnosed with Hodgkin’s disease. “My chest was hurting, and I was sweating. So when I got to the hospital, they ran the test and stuff. ... And then what they found was a mass in my chest.

“So then, next thing I know, we’re meeting with the oncologist and we’re getting a plan set, ready to have chemo and radiation and take care of it,” he added. “Luckily, I’d found it at an earlier stage.”

Being informed there were 16 symptoms and signs of Hodgkin’s, “I probably had about nine of them,” he said, adding that taking cancer warning signs seriously is “another thing I’ve preached a lot about. ... I do get a physical every year, and had been. ... And if I hadn’t done that, I don’t know about where I’d be, at what stage of cancer I’d been.”

A special moment seemed to come by chance. “I remember when I was first at St. Mary’s Hospital, and I was in my room, and I looked out, and I saw my (former) head football coach (at Fulton), Bob Black, walking around the track down below where I was at,” he said. “And that, to me, was just a sign of ‘I’m going to be OK.’ because he instilled that stuff about all the things I believed in about toughness and about taking things head-on and stuff. And so that was just an encouraging thing for me to see.”

Brought up in a Christian home, yet also brought up to be “tough and hard-nosed,” Courtney said, “I just knew that I was going to fight it. I had faith, family and football, and I had people around me that had supported

me through the years, and they had prepared me for adversity.”

However, about his treatments, “man, they were tough,” he said, agreeing to take an above average dosage in chemotherapy “because I was in pretty good health. ... My tumor was in my chest between the heart and lung. And so, they were just seeing if I could take that much dosage.

“After the first month, in that grind there, I went from 18 chemos to 28 radiations,” Courtney added. “And it was tough starting, it was tough in the middle.”

However, “I only missed two days of practice, and I was at every game,” he said. “Now, there were days (at practice) I had to sit in the golf cart and just try to take it in.

“You’d be so nauseated. ... There’s times I would just lean over outside the golf cart and just throw up, and then I’d be OK; I’d just get some water,” Courtney added.

But football was therapeutic. “One of the things that kept me going was I felt like I still connected to something,” Courtney said. “That’s where my attention was. I wasn’t sitting around worrying about it or not doing anything and just laying around ... redirecting my attention and not sitting around and feeling sorry for yourself ... That’s because you need something to do. I tell people, I say, ‘Whatever your passion is, that’s what you have to hold on to.’

“As the dosages started coming down” by late October and early November, “I did feel a little better at the end,” he added.

Roughly eight months after being diagnosed, “I remember it was at our banquet in December is when I was cancer free,” Courtney said.

Second Round of Cancer

Forever grateful for lots of support



With the cancer coming back to challenge Eddie Courtney once again, as diagnosed just after COVID hit in 2020, “Well, it was tough. I thought, ‘Oh, wow,’ because you know what you were going through,” he said.

Needing roughly a month to recover this time, “The lucky thing about it, I did not have to have chemo; I was able to do it surgically, and that was a lot easier,” Courtney said. “But still, when you say the word cancer, it really gets your attention. But I looked at it this way: I said, ‘I know how to get through this, and I’m going to do it wherever I need to do it.’”

With his son, offensive coordinator Geoff Courtney, stepping up as interim head coach, “There was really a three-week period of time there that was just hard — it was really hard,” the coach said. “But it was a little different” than the first time.

“I thought after surgery, two or three days after, I’d be fine and bounce back. But it took a while,” he added. “And I just had to be smart about it. I didn’t need to do anything foolish. And I felt like Geoff and the rest of the coaches, they can handle this. I’ve tried to allow them to grow as coaches, so I thought that was a good chance for them to find out what they’re going to do if I wasn’t around.”

Upon returning to his coaching duties, “I was back trying to walk the treadmill and then do some lifting, but not a lot,” he said. “Just trying to stay active.”

Great support

Courtney said he will forever be grateful for the support of “my immediate family, my father and mother (the late Paul and Juanita Courtney), and my sisters (Vicki Howard and Paula Browning), my brothers-in-law (Mike Browning and Vic Howard) and in-laws (Henry and Aileen Russell). Then I had my coaching friends that would always call me, text me, try to encourage me, asking how I’m doing.

“And just my faith. It made me stronger in my faith, my belief in God, and just drew me closer to what’s real in life and what’s important in being a Christian today.”

Special Award

In honor of Courtney, the annual Eddie Courtney Courage Award was established to recognize those similar to the Admirals’ long-time skipper in terms of battling severe adversity with strength and determination.

**ON BEHALF OF THE FARRAGUT HIGH SCHOOL'S
P.E. & WELLNESS DEPARTMENT;
WE WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE
COACH EDDIE COURTNEY ON HIS RETIREMENT.**

**COACH WAS A VITAL PART OF OUR DEPARTMENT
AS A DEDICATED TEACHER AND A GREAT FRIEND.**

**THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU’VE DONE FOR FARRAGUT HIGH SCHOOL.
YOU WILL BE MISSED!**

CONGRATULATIONS AGAIN & ENJOY YOUR RETIREMENT.

• “Coach (Eddie) Courtney, he actually cares about the person you’re becoming, the man you’re becoming, the life that you’re preparing,” said Tommy Lawhorn, a standout defensive lineman (FHS Class of 2005). “He had a huge impact in raising me into the man that I am today from that four-year period of my life. And outside of my parents and my family, I’d say coach Courtney has had the biggest impact on my life, helping me become the person I am today.”

• “I would just say that he was one of the most influential people in my athletic career,” said Eli Purcell (Class of 2021), a star linebacker/running back who, as a standout college linebacker, has transferred from Wofford to Tennessee. “It’s always impressed me how every single person he got in contact with, he always has their best interests at heart. I just think that really shows the character that he has and the character that he wants to instill in every player or person he comes in contact with.”

• “Coach was always very helpful to me as a young coach,” said one of his former rivals, ex-Bearden High School head coach Morgan Shinlever, now BHS athletic director. “There was several times I’d call him and ask him what they were doing and running by situations that I had at Bearden and get his take on it. He was always willing to take the time to give me an example if he had dealt with something similar, or give me his opinion on it. I think that speaks a lot for older men in the coaching profession, when they take the time to help groom the younger guys with less experience. Even though we were rivals on the field, he was always one that I felt like cared about me and our well-being as young coaches.”

• “Coach Courtney, he was a great coach; he taught me a lot of life lessons,” said Dawson Moore, a former standout quarterback (Class of 2021). “Most

coaches nowadays, they just try to win as much as possible,” Moore added. “But coach Courtney’s main objective was to teach us how to push through certain things and how to deal with certain relationships or get through tough times or confusing times.

“It was all about his team and his Town and taking care of everybody. He is a good man.”

• “The very last year (I coached), we were able to beat him 42-34, but he came across the field and he said, ‘coach, great job. I’m happy for you.’ And called me again later that night. It didn’t matter win, lose or draw, Eddie was going to be the same after every game,” said Graham Clark, former head coach of King-

sport Dobyns-Bennett.

• “Every single one of his players loved playing for him,” said Andrew Martland, a former FHS quarterback (Class of 2009). “That’s the first thing that comes to my mind. The second is a mentor that influenced thousands of not only football players,

but he was also a teacher all those years, and so he also had impact in the classroom as well. The third thing, he was an amazing family man; a great husband and a great father.”

• After he graduated, “I always would stop by at the fieldhouse or on the field, back when it had grass, or just come into his office, and he always just wanted to see how things were going,” said Danny Vest, an FHS Sports Hall of Fame inductee as a star receiver/defensive back (Class of 1990). “He didn’t want to, like, reminisce about the playing days ... but mainly he just wanted to see how you were doing and how the family was doing and how life in general was going for you. If there was anything he could do to help or give advice. A lot of people didn’t see what he did outside of coaching. ... But of all the things he did for people outside of football, I was one of those people.”

Peers & Players alike praise Eddie

“... They don’t want to talk football. ... They understand all that because I come to church to worship, not talk about football.”



A Man of Faith

Having been brought up in a Christian home, “I went to City View Baptist Church there in downtown Knoxville,” Courtney said. “In fact, I was called to be a deacon there in that church.

“And then, after we had moved down here in Farragut, probably about 10 years after I was here, I felt like I needed to be more involved (locally) and find a church here,” the coach added. “So I knew Dr. Doug Sager (then senior pastor) at First Baptist Concord. In fact, he spoke to our team a couple of times. We’d always used somebody on the staff at that time to be our team chaplain.

“We just felt comfortable in the First Baptist Concord Sunday school class and worship service. It’s just been a blessing that I understand what that means being around a fellowship of people in my Sunday school class. ... They don’t want to talk football. ... They understand all that because I come to church to worship, not talk about football.”

“I think one thing about Coach Courtney was I know he’s a man of faith,” said Red Bank head coach Ted Gatewood, who coached against Courtney at Ooltewah High School.

**Coach Courtney,
we salute you!**



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on your retirement,
COACH COURTNEY!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR YEARS OF
LEADERSHIP IN OUR COMMUNITY



Turkey Creek Medical Center
Farragut’s Hometown Hospital



Heir to the Loudest Whistle

The Courtney era of Farragut High School football has ended — yet it's also beginning.

An FHS football ballboy upon the ascension of his father, Eddie Courtney, to head coach of the Admirals in 1996, Geoff Courtney became a standout wide receiver/defensive back for his father's team (Class of 2006) before making it as a walk-on receiver/kick holder at the University of Tennessee.

About new Admirals football skipper Geoff Courtney, an FHS business teacher who has been an assistant coach under his father since 2010, "I watched him grow up from here (indicating his small size as a child with his hand extended down) to where he is right now," Donald Dodgen, FHS athletic director, said. "An outstanding young man. I mean, he will fit into this program. He's been in the program for a long time. He will do really, really well. I'm proud of him."

The junior Courtney already has earned statewide recognition, having been named Tennessee Football Coaches Association's Division I Class 6A Assistant Coach of the Year in 2022 (See photo, page 28).

Geoff Courtney, 35, became the 14th head coach in Farragut High School football history, with his hiring announced during a press conference in the program's Team Room Friday morning, March 22.

FHS principal Dr. John Bartlett began by praising his predecessor and father, who announced his retirement Wednesday, March 6, after 28 seasons as Admirals skipper.

Eddie Courtney "led with class and dignity, led it the right way, did things the right way, with integrity, and raised a bunch of young men," Bartlett told a gathering of players, coaches, administrators and media. "Among those young men he got to raise during that time was his own son, who's grown up in this program, who has followed in his father's footsteps, coaching football here, and has prepared for this moment."

During his speech to the gathering, Geoff Courtney thanked his parents — which also includes his mother, Anita Courtney — and his wife, Taylor Courtney (who have a daughter, Charley, 3) and other family members "who mean the world to me."

He also thanked fellow coaches, "who I have the pleasure to work with each and every single day," for their mentoring, which began in 2010 before the junior Courtney was elevated to offensive coordinator in 2017.

"It's really a proud day for me. ... Geoff has been preparing for this for years," Eddie Courtney said about his son. "Geoff's certainly a fit here, but he's going to have the freedom to do some things he thinks will make it better."

"I think he's well-prepared to do that."

Thank You Coach

for Shining so Bright in Our Community



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Father, Coach & Mentor

About having his father as a coaching mentor, “I think there’s no better person to learn from,” Geoff Courtney said about replacing Eddie Courtney at Farragut.

“In this profession, I’ve been very blessed to have an up-close, first-hand experience with that,” he added. “He’s a guy that people know from all over: Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama.

“Coaches from all over will call him and pick his brain and lean on him for things because they know the type of man he is and how he’s had a successful program. I’ve just been very blessed to be able to have somebody like that that I can work with side-by-side.”

Even in 2024 and beyond, “He’ll still be somebody that I can pick his brain on some things, some topics,” the new head coach added.

In advising his son about what’s ahead, “It’s like three jobs,” Eddie Courtney said, emphasizing the desire to lighten Geoff Courtney’s load. “You teach, so there’s six, seven hours a day.

“Then you’re coaching, and all the things that go with coaching, whether it’s raising money or whether it’s talking to college coaches or running your offseason program,” he added.

“And then you have, on top of that, all those other things you’ve got to do, like a maintenance guy or someone like that. ... You’re a groundskeeper, you’re a handyman, you’re all that stuff. I mean, really. And so, that’s why it is a 12-hour-a-day job, year-around.”





‘Same vision, next level’

As for his focus in 2024 and beyond, “Our vision is going to remain the same; we’re just going to take it to the next level,” the new Admirals skipper Geoff Courtney said. “We are going to be the best high school football program in the state of Tennessee. And what that means, and how we do that, is about surrounding yourself with the best people.”



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Not the Coach, yet remaining a Key Cog

To help lighten the load for his son, new Farragut football head coach Geoff Courtney, “I’m going to stay on as director of Football Operations, which means I’m going to do a lot of things behind the scenes,” retiring Admirals skipper Eddie Courtney said. “Things I enjoy doing: field maintenance and try to raise money for projects that we have for the football program; just try to enjoy that part of it.

... I’m going to encourage former players and people who have been

our supporters for football,” he added. “I’ve always kept an open door. ... So I’m going to enjoy that role of being able to just reconnect with a lot of people and just be available.”

Emphasizing he will not be coaching in any capacity, “if they ask me to help them do something or whatever, I’ll be available, whether it’s sweep the turf or whatever it is,” the senior Courtney said. “I enjoy doing those things and let those coaches be able to coach.”

Knowing first-hand the importance of family, “The coaching staff we’ve got now, most of them are young, got small kids,” Eddie Courtney added. “I’m encouraging them to either bring their kids to practice or make sure that they spend time with their family.”

On Behalf of the
Farragut High School Athletics Department,
we would like to thank you for 28 incredible seasons,
& leaving a legacy that will last for ages.

“There aren’t enough words to describe coach Courtney. He’s a gentleman, an outstanding teacher and educator, and a pillar of this community. He isn’t just the heartbeat, he is Farragut High School.”

— Donald Dodgen,
Athletics Director at Farragut High School.

Photo CRFOTO.com



THANK YOU

farragutpress would like to wish Coach Courtney the Best of Luck in his new role and continued success.

It has been a pleasure.

For help in compiling photos and information for this tribute to Eddie Courtney, we would like to extend a special thank you to the following:

- All photos of Eddie Courtney from 2016 forward (except for family photo on page 19) and action photos were courtesy of **Carlos Reveiz/crfoto.com**
- All photos dating back to the late 1960s through 2009 were courtesy of **Anita Courtney** (sharing her collection) and **Jack Tate**, FHS Sports Information director, who made annuals available from which to copy photos
- Information and quotes are from **the Courtney family** (including **Geoff Courtney and his family**), from former **FHS players and coaches**, plus various **rival coaches**.

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“Our vision is going to remain the same; we’re just going to take it to the next level,”

~ Geoff Courtney,
new Admirals football skipper