

Abbott Looks to Construct Angry Red Football

LHS is taking the road less traveled. In a move that seemingly secures Liberal High School's football program will have a coach who loves Liberal, LHS announced 1980 LHS graduate Cliff Abbott is Liberal's next head football coach without working full time in the district. Liberal Athletic Director Scott Hinkle announced Abbott during the Sportsguys Friday morning. Abbott will be Liberal's sixth different head coach in 10 years after Rich Anderson came from Pratt and coached Liberal in 2002; Gary Cornelsen filled in during the 2003 season; Steve Warner coached in 2004 and 2005 after arriving from Marysville; Tom Schroeder coached during the 2006, 07, and 08 seasons after arriving from Hugoton; and Wade Standley coached the past two years after arriving from Tulsa Union.

Abbott, who played in the 1979 LHS state runner up team says he is proud of this position. "I am very humbled and very excited," Abbott said. "It's hard to explain all of the emotions going on with the opportunity that I have. I can hardly wait to get started."

It is his first head coaching job but the former New York Giant is no stranger to coaching. Abbott coached at his alma mater Tulsa from 1986-1997, serving as strength and conditioning coach, special teams coordinator, defensive line coach, linebackers coach, and secondary coach at various times throughout his tenure at Tulsa. Abbott's most recent coaching stints included coaching at West Middle School during the 2008 and 2009 seasons and assisting LHS last year.

Abbott was an assistant on Standley's staff last year. He will be a Rule 10 coach as he runs Abbott Construction. He says he plans on spending afternoons in the weight room and is working on assembling a staff. He says he feels an outpouring of support from USD 480 administration. "Thank you very much to Mr. Hinkle who was more than great going through this while I was trying to make sure this was going to fit for my family and for my business and most of all for the kids here in the district and the city of Liberal. With him and Mr. Adams (LHS principal Keith Adams), and Mr. Stout (USD 480 Superintendent Lance Stout), I have received overwhelming support."

The Redskins haven't enjoyed a winning season since a 6-4 2005 campaign and haven't won a playoff game since 2004.