

Bob Ford

Head Coach



The architect of the University at Albany's football program, Bob Ford has established a solid reputation with his positive attitude and a coaching philosophy that instills loyalty among each member of his team and staff.

Ford, appointed on April 27, 1970, has been Albany's only head coach since the program was reinstated after a 46-year absence. Since then, he has compiled a 24-year varsity record of 137-98 as the Great Dane mentor, while his 146 career victories ranks among the top 10 active NCAA Division II head coaches. His Albany teams have recorded seven or more wins in eight different seasons, including last year's 7-3 club, and posted just six losing campaigns.

At one time, Ford was the youngest head football coach in the nation, when the 26-year-old took over the reins at St. Lawrence University in 1965. In his first season, he guided the Saints to an Independent Collegiate Athletic Conference (ICAC) title. He came to Albany five years later to start the first gridiron squad at the University since 1924.

After three seasons at the club level, the program was upgraded to varsity status in 1973, and finished with a 7-2 record. One year later, the Great Danes completed the school's only undefeated season with a 9-0 mark.

Ford's 1977 team earned a NCAA Division III playoff berth. After a season-opening loss, the Great Danes rebounded with nine consecutive victories. Albany defeated Hampden Sydney in a thrilling 51-45 contest to begin the post-season, losing to eventual national champion Widener in the semi-final round.

In 1978, Coach Ford's mystique grew before a national audience on ABC television. His last-minute addition of a field goal kicker direct from the soccer team paid off in a victory over third-ranked Ithaca. Dario Arango kicked a 45-yard field goal in the last two minutes to provide a 9-6 victory.

Arguably Ford's best squad was in 1985, when the Great Danes rallied from a three-touchdown deficit for a 33-21 victory over Plymouth State and the Eastern College

Athletic Conference (ECAC) North championship. The '85 team, which produced the greatest comeback in Ford's coaching career, boasted offensive and defensive units which were nationally ranked, and supported by five Pizza Hut and one Associated Press All-America players.

Albany's football program is also known for the high standards required of its coaching staff. Ford's "coaching factory" has allowed many of his assistants to earn their master's degrees, while working at the collegiate level. Their experiences at Albany have allowed them to move on to positions in other programs.

According to a recent review, more than 90 coaches, who have started their careers under Ford's tutelage, are currently employed with 60 different high schools, colleges, and professional teams from around the nation and the world.

A starting quarterback in his senior year at Springfield College in Massachusetts, Ford was given the "Greatest Desire to Improve" Award by the school's athletic department. He received an undergraduate degree in physical education from Springfield in 1959, and later would earn his doctorate from the College in the same discipline. He gained a master's degree from St. Lawrence in educational administration in 1960.

Ford's first coaching opportunity came as an assistant at St. Lawrence in the fall of 1959. He then moved to Albright College in Pennsylvania as an assistant for four seasons, where he coached the secondary and offensive backfield, and was part of a program which produced a 21-game winning streak.

At Albright, Ford also coached the wrestling and golf teams. He returned to Springfield in 1964 as a secondary coach, and later was named defensive coordinator at his alma mater in 1969.



Beginning in 1977, Ford was the director of athletics at University at Albany for five years. During that time he managed a program which sponsored 25 varsity sports for men and women.

A 1986 inductee into the Wachusett Regional High School Hall of Fame, Ford is presently active in the National Football Foundation & Hall of Fame, and serves as secretary of the NFFCHF's Capital District Chapter. He also delivers goods to the region's needy as a volunteer for the Food Shuttle.

Ford, 60, is a member of the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA), and serves on the AFCA's Board of Trustees along with West Virginia's Don Nehlen, John Mackovic of Texas, Florida State's Bobby Bowden, and AFCA Executive Director and former Baylor head coach Grant Teaff.



PERSONAL

Name: Robert M. Ford

Overall Record: 146-1 20-1 (28 years)

Albany Record: 137-98-0 (24 years)

EDUCATION

Wachusett Regional High School, Holden, Mass. Springfield College, B.S. in physical education, 1959

St. Lawrence University, M.S. in educational administration, 1960

Springfield College, Ph.D. in physical education, 1970

ATHLETIC

Wachusett Regional H.S.: Football, Basketball, Baseball
Springfield: Football

COACHING

1959 St. Lawrence University	Runnings Backs, Secondary
1960 Albright College	Secondary, Offensive Backs
1961 Albright College	Secondary, Offensive Backs
1962 Albright College	Secondary, Offensive Backs
1963 Albright College	Secondary, Offensive Backs
1964 Springfield College	Secondary
1965 St. Lawrence University	Head Coach (4-4)
1966 St. Lawrence University	Head Coach (2-6)
1967 St. Lawrence University	Head Coach (1-6-1)
1968 St. Lawrence University	Head Coach (2-6)
1969 Springfield College	Defensive Coordinator
1970* University at Albany	Head Coach (2-4)
1971* University at Albany	Head Coach (4-4)
1972* University at Albany	Head Coach (6-1 -1)
1973 University at Albany	Head Coach (7-2)
1974 University at Albany	Head Coach (9-0)
1975 University at Albany	Head Coach (7-2)
1976 University at Albany	Head Coach (4-5)
1977 University at Albany	Head Coach (9-2)
1978 University at Albany	Head Coach (7-3)
1979 University at Albany	Head Coach (6-3)
1980 University at Albany	Head Coach (5-5)
1981 University at Albany	Head Coach (7-3)
1982 University at Albany	Head Coach (6-3)
1983 University at Albany	Head Coach (3-7)
1984 University at Albany	Head Coach (5-5)
1985 University at Albany	Head Coach (9-2)
1986 University at Albany	Head Coach (4-6)
1987 University at Albany	Head Coach (5-5)
1988 University at Albany	Head Coach (5-5)
1989 University at Albany	Head Coach (5-4)
1990 University at Albany	Head Coach (3-7)
1991 University at Albany	Head Coach (5-5)
1992 University at Albany	Head Coach (6-4)
1993 University at Albany	Head Coach (6-4)
1994 University at Albany	Head Coach (4-6)
1995 University at Albany	Head Coach (3-7)
1996 University at Albany	Head Coach (7-3)

* club teams

COACH FORD TALKS ABOUT:

Eastern Football Conference: "It's a new experience for myself and a new experience for every guy that's playing here. The players and coaches have something to shoot for with the divisional playoff system, standings and all-star teams, and eventually you develop some long-term rivals. It's difficult for independent teams at

all levels now. Conference membership reduces scheduling headaches and allows you to play schools with common philosophies."

New York Giants Training Camp: "We have an opportunity on a daily basis to observe a professional football staff and athletes go through practice sessions. At the same time, we have established a rapport with many of their coaches. We have been allowed to sit in on meetings and discuss philosophies, and that has been an invaluable lesson. The camp has improved our athletic facilities, and the game field and practice areas have been treated with tender loving care."

What Ford Looks For in a Recruit: "I would like to start with kids who take great pride in themselves, in what they do, and are willing to sign their name to things they are associated. I like young people who are interested in getting a college education, and have a great desire to excel on the college level academically. If you can surround the program with those type of people you have a better chance of winning.

You must also assess him as a football player. His physical tools are important: height, weight, upper body strength, leg strength, quickness, agility, balance, and coordination. Each of those qualities have certain specific requirements at the position each kid wants to play. We don't impose those requirements, our opponents impose them. Quickness of foot, the ability to move his feet and move them in a quick fashion, is important.

We look at his ability to perform. Football is a game of fundamentals, such as, running, blocking, tackling, throwing and catching. Also, there are intangibles. Can he assimilate what the coaching staff is teaching or how does he handle success or failure."

What Albany Offers a Prospective Student: "The University at Albany offers a great education. We have a strong student body which is highly academically-oriented. Our faculty provides a greater in-depth knowledge, and we have a number of master's and doctorate programs.

Many of our graduates go to graduate school, especially the professional areas of medicine, dentistry and law. With our tuition around \$3,400 per year, a family has a pretty good chance of affording an Albany education.

There's a little bit of city life here in Albany. There are opportunities to do things, but you're not saddled with large city problems. In addition, I truly believe that football players want to be part of a very tight group. They look to us, as coaches, for leadership, counsel and advice, and I think we should provide a family figure as they go through this process."

FORD FACT: More than 90 of Bob Ford's assistant coaches are currently working in the professional, college and high school ranks. Dave Campo is the defensive coordinator for the Dallas Cowboys, while Tony Wise is a Chicago Bears' assistant. John Crea has been a scout for the New York Giants since 1992. College head coaches include Pennsylvania's Al Bagnoli and area mentors Ed Zaloom (Siena), John Audino (Union) and Joe King (Rensselaer).