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### **FORMER NFL PLAYER HIRED AT WNMU AS NEW DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR**

SILVER CITY, N.M. – The Western New Mexico University Mustang football team has hired former NFL player Ronnie Heard as its new Defensive Coordinator.

WNMU Mustangs' head football coach Bernie Busken contacted Heard earlier this year and asked if he would like to join the other five football coaches at WNMU. The 31 year-old Heard had recently finished a year with the Atlanta Falcons, which followed five years with the San Francisco 49ers.

Heard said yes, and today the WNMU football team is headed into a season with a coach that has over a decade of football experience.

Busken knew what he was looking for when he contacted Heard; after all he had coached Heard during his high school days at Brazoswood High School in Lake Jackson, Texas. Both kept in touch throughout Heard's career, which include his time with the University of Mississippi football team and ultimately the National Football League.

Heard is one of at least two other NFL players that were previously coached by Busken, those include John Beck of the Miami Dolphins and Todd Heap with the Baltimore Ravens.

As the new Defensive Coordinator at WNMU, Coach Heard brings his NFL defensive experience to the field. "It's going to be challenging at times, running a new style of defense," said Heard, "something more NFL based."

Most of the defensive players are returning starters, "an experienced group," said Heard. The training, he added, is much like the NFL. There is no true off-season for WNMU players, as most train the entire year. The prospects look promising for the new coach.

"I think we can improve," said Heard as he applied his strategic vision for victory, "there are three phases to a game; offense, defense, and special teams, if we can win two of the three, most of the time you come out victorious."

The WNMU Mustangs are scheduled to play ten games in the upcoming season. The first home game, against Mesa State College, is scheduled for September 20 at 1:00pm.



Photo courtesy of the SF 49ers

*Located in Silver City, New Mexico, Western New Mexico University has served the people of the state of New Mexico and its surrounding areas as a comprehensive, regional, rural, public coeducational university since 1893 and caters to a student body diverse in age, culture, language and ethnic background.*

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