

Randy Ricedorff leaving Show Low to lead new East Valley charter school football program

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(Photo: David Kadlubowski/azcentral sports)

Randy Ricedorff, who led Show Low's football program the past 10 years, is returning to the Valley to start a new American Leadership Academy football team in Gilbert.

The ALA in Gilbert will be the third ALA junior high and high school in the East Valley.

Queen Creek American Leadership, led by coach Rich Edwards, became the first charter school to capture an Arizona Interscholastic Association football championship this past season in the 3A Conference.

Ricedorff, who was a key defensive player on Mesa Westwood's last state championship team in 1988, was the leading candidate to be the next Mesa Red Mountain football coach before the ALA offer came along two

weeks ago.

He said he will be assistant director for athletics and fine arts and head football coach at the school.

"At the appropriate time, ALA will participate in the AIA," Ricedorff said. "It is ALA's goal and desire to enter the AIA as soon as practical."

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Ricedorff coached his sons, Rathen and Rhett, both quarterbacks, at Show Low. Rathen Ricedorff was azcentral sports' Small Schools Football Player of the Year in 2010 when he led Show Low to the 3A state championship. He is transferring to Boise State after playing quarterback the past two years at Mesa Community College.

Rhett, a senior, led Show Low to the top seed in the 3A playoffs, before the Cougars lost in the semifinals to Tucson Sabino, 23-21, for their only loss this season.

Show Low also won the 2007 state championship under Ricedorff.

"The memories of the last 10 years have been unbelievable," Ricedorff said. "Cowbell Nation is incredible. From the community support to the administration to the amazing coaches and players, our family is simply special. I don't believe I could have chosen better people to associate with. Superintendents Kevin Brackney and Shad Housely have always been committed to student excellence. (Principal) Farrell Adams is, without question, one of the greatest leaders in public education that this country offers.

"Both my athletic directors, Nathen Richardson and David Nikolaus, have been tremendous men of character and great sources of support."

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Ricedorff also is thankful to his wife and children for their support and encouragement.

He said he is excited about this next chapter in his life.

"I 100 percent believe in their core values and vision for the future," Ricedorff said. "ALA is led by individuals of high character with tremendous work ethic and a passion to build future leaders that one day will change the world.

"As I have walked the halls and visited the different campuses, I have seen excellence in action and a family culture that I value as a coach and teacher. ALA is a school that I would want my own kids and grandkids to attend. They simply strive to be the best in everything they do. My goal as a coach and member of the ALA team is to help build the best school in America."