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By Dennis Garcia
SportsTone.net

RANDLEMAN - When Brandon Varner resigned as head coach of the Randleman High School girls basketball team in 2023 after five very successful seasons, he said he was going to "recharge my batteries a little and see what happens."

Consider his batteries recharged.

A somewhat revolving door of head coaches that began to turn when Varner left, has circled its way around as Varner has agreed to return to lead the Tigers once again.

Varner "re-introduced" himself to players Thursday afternoon.

Varner takes over for Scott Tyson, who led the Tigers to a 16-11 record in his only year at the helm. Tyson accepted a teaching position at Thomasville High School. Steve Rightmyer led the Tigers in the 2023-2024 season.

Under Varner, Rightmyer and Tyson, the Tigers won 40 straight conference games before falling to Southwestern Randolph in December. The Tigers finished 7-5 in PAC action this year.

Varner, who has been at Randleman Middle School since 2006 and the school's athletic director for the past 10 years, said the passion shown by RHS Principal Corey Phillips and the understanding of RMS Principal Holly Grissom played key roles in returning to the head coaching position.

"He wanted me to come talk to him and I went in to see just what he was thinking," Varner said, adding he was approached a year ago, but elected not to discuss the possibility of returning at that time. "He's so passionate about athletics and he's so passionate about the girls basketball program. He wouldn't let me say no this time."

Varner, who will remain a Physical Education teacher and assist in coaching football at RMS, said he also received support from Grissom. Varner said he knew he couldn't maintain his position as the RMS athletic director and coach at the high school, something he did for five years the first time he led the RHS program.

"Spending as much time as I needed to at the middle school and coaching at the high school, something had to come off my plate," Varner said. "Miss Grissom was so understanding. She was so supportive. I received a lot of support from both principals."



*Randleman girls basketball coach
Brandon Varner.*

In Varner's first stint as head coach, he took over a program that was 3-9 in league play and 3-19 overall. In his very first year, the Tigers improved to 10-2 in conference play, winning the PAC championship, and 15-10 overall.

RHS finished 12-0 and 24-3 in the 2019-2020 season and followed that with a 10-2 league mark and 12-4 record in the pandemic-shortened 2020-2021 campaign. His final two seasons produced undefeated 12-0 conference records and overall marks of 25-1 and 27-2. In his five years, he was 103-20, including 56-4 and five conference championships.

"We wanted someone who is going to be dedicated to the girls and had done it before at a high level," RHS Athletic Director Jake Smith said of the hiring. "He brings instant credibility. We know the sacrifice he's made to put the program on the map to be so successful."

The Tigers are set to return key players including Bella Byman, Kadie Green, Jacqueline McDaniel and Addyson Dees.

Varner will have his former assistant coach Shawn Cassidy along with current assistant coach Taylor Gantt on his staff and he said both will play key roles in the program.

Varner also said he knows what he must establish immediately.

"We have to get back to structure, discipline and being good fundamentally," Varner said. "The conference changes and we're going to have to go to work. Anything you want to achieve, you have to work for."