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By Dennis Garcia

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ASHEBORO - Nate Cockman is in a very familiar position at this time of year as he begins another year of coaching high school football. The big difference is where Cockman is coaching high school football.

Cockman, who was an assistant football coach and the head baseball coach at Eastern Randolph High School, has switched colors from green and gold to gold and blue as he is now at Southwestern Randolph High School, helping longtime friend Seth Baxter.

Football will be Cockman's only coaching responsibilities at this time at SWR, saying his oldest son Calvin is beginning T-ball and wants to be a part of that in the fall.

"It was a big family decision," Cockman said after a summer of leading the Liberty Post 81 baseball team, a position he also resigned. "I have two small boys and one is getting ready to start T-ball and he asked me if I was going to be his coach. I felt it was time to step away from (high school baseball) to spend more time with my family."

He said he thought about resigning from the ER baseball positions and remaining at the school, but he said he believed it would have been too tough once the new season began.

"That was the hardest decision," Cockman said of leaving Eastern Randolph, the school he graduated from. "It crossed our minds and we debated not doing baseball and staying at Eastern Randolph. That would be like fighting an uphill battle. It would be tough for me to watch them go to practices and to games and for me not to be involved. It was one of those things that would be best for me and my family to have new scenery."

But that decision was tough. Cockman led the Wildcats into the regional baseball championship series twice in his tenure



*Nate Cockman.*

"This definitely was a 100 percent family decision," Cockman added. "It's nothing personal at all. I loved my time (at ER). For me and my family, this is the next part of my journey.'

Cockman said the move was the right one for his family at this time, but added he wouldn't rule out returning to coach baseball at some time.

"I would never want to close that option off," said Cockman, who offered his services for the new Liberty Post 81 coaching staff in helping with paperwork and what needs to be completed to be eligible for an American Legion team. "I will help them out in any way I can.

"Baseball has been pretty much my life from the start," Cockman added. "I will keep an open mind. This is not going to be the end of it. I'm just going to give myself a break. I poured a lot into the sport of baseball"

Cockman will coach the offensive line at SWR.