

Sports

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Masella taking reins at Wagner

A Seahawk Hall of Famer returns to try his hand at rebuilding program

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Tom Masella is coming back to Wagner College.

Masella, the Tottenville HS product who played for, graduated from and coached at Wagner, is the Seahawks' new head football coach, the school announced yesterday. Masella replaces Jason Houghtaling, who was let go Friday after a five seasons and a 16-40 record.

Masella, 60, will be formally introduced by Wagner College president Dr. Joel W. Martin and director of athletics Walt Hameline at a press conference tomorrow morning.

"It's great to be home and back (at) my alma mater. I'd like to thank Dr. Martin and Coach Hameline for placing the trust in me as we look forward to rebuilding a championship program here at Wagner," said Masella, who grew up in Great Kills. "I'm excited to meet our current players and coaches and hit the recruiting trails as soon as possible. Wagner is known for

SEE MASELLA, F5



Tom Masella has been named head football coach at Wagner College, his alma mater.

Advance photo

Masella

FROM F1

having great players from the metropolitan area and I look forward to reconnecting with those high school coaches. We have a great tradition here on Staten Island and hopefully we can make the community proud of our football program again."

Masella, a Wagner Hall of Famer as a player, was the defensive coordinator at Northeast Conference rival Bryant this season.

"It's wonderful to welcome Tom Masella back to the Wagner family and home to Staten Island, where his career as a leader in football began decades ago," said Martin. "Building on the good work of his predecessors and tapping his extraordinary experience as a coach and mentor to young people, he will strengthen the proud tradition that is Seahawk football at Wagner College."

Masella was Hameline's associate head coach during the historic 2012 season as the Seahawks won their first NEC championship and became the first NEC team to win a game in the NCAA FCS Playoffs, a 31-20 victory over Patriot League champion Colgate.

"We're thrilled to bring Coach Masella back to our football program," Hameline added. "His ties to Staten Island and the Wagner College community along with his proven track record as a coach make him a great fit for our football program. As a for-

mer Seahawk student-athlete and assistant coach here he knows what it takes to be successful on Grymes Hill and I'm confident he will help our student-athletes achieve their goals on the field and in the classroom."

Masella brings over 30 years of collegiate coaching experience back to Wagner, including six seasons at the FBS level, 10 as a head coach, and 15 years as a defensive coordinator at the FBS and FCS level.

Apart from helping the Seahawks to a league title in 2012, Masella was a part of conference championship teams at Boston University (1993), Louisiana Tech (2001), UMass (2003), Central Connecticut (2004, 2005), and Fordham (2007).

Masella's head coaching experience includes two years at Boston University (1996-97), two seasons at the helm at CCSU (2004-2005) and six at Fordham (2006-2011).

Masella was a standout defensive back at Wagner, helping the Seahawks go 17-3 his final two seasons as a player.

In Masella's junior season of 1980, Wagner went 8-2 record and made its first appearance in the NCAA Division III playoffs. Masella was a co-captain on the 1981 team that went 9-1. He was inducted into the Wagner Hall of Fame in 2018.

Masella's family includes his wife, Lesli-Ann, as well as sons, T.J., and Jack.