

# Larry 'Cotton' Adams one of the greatest to play and coach at Corbin High School



CORBIN — Larry "Cotton" Adams has been pegged as one of the greatest individuals to play and coach at Corbin High School, and as the last coach to lead a Redhound team to a state title, Adams continues to be a Redhound icon to this day.

In 1960, Adams joined the Corbin Redhounds football team as a

freshman, and after watching what Adams called one of the best teams Corbin has ever seen from the sidelines, he soon realized that if he wanted to get out on the field, he would need to bulk up.

"I set back and realized this was something I really wanted to do," Adams said. "I was just a little bitty, skinny kid at that time but I'd made my mind up that I needed to get bigger and stronger. Well, I never did get bigger but I got a lot stronger and kept doing those things in the weight room and that (the 1960 Redhound team) was what inspired me — I wanted to be a part of that."

As a junior, Adams was a starting offensive lineman for the Redhounds who played in the 1962 Class 2A state title game against Danville, losing 13-6 to be named runners-up.

"We played for a state championship and we'd beat the state champion in the regular season," Adams said. "We beat them 18-6 at their place and then they flipped the script when we played them for the state championship but we were very good and so were they."

In his senior year, Adams was offered an opportunity to continue his football career at the collegiate level, something Adams had never dreamed of as a young kid.

"During that four years that I played, I knew that's what I wanted to do," he said. "And I had the opportunity — I didn't even know I'd get the opportunity until my senior year in April or May and it had a lot to do with Dr. Jack J. Early who was the president of the school."

Early, who was from Corbin, offered Adams an opportunity to play college football for and continue his education at Dakota Wesleyan in Mitchell, South Dakota which Adams happily accepted.

"He offered me a deal and I accepted the deal and most of it had to do with, 'if you come out here, you have to stay,'" Adams said. "Well, it was a big challenge because I'd never been in the midwest, much less South Dakota. So, I remember I had to work that summer to save all my money and I got on a bus, and 58 hours later I arrived in Mitchell, South Dakota. I didn't know a person there except the president of the school. It was challenging and I got homesick like everybody does but I got through that. As it turned out, I had a good career playing there at Dakota Wesleyan."

When Adams graduated college at the age of 21, he had an offer to coach at a high school in Iowa but soon learned of what he called a "unique" situation at Corbin and instead took the job as an assistant coach for the Redhounds.

"When the opportunity came available in '68, I broke a contract because I was going to work in Iowa and I got out of that contract and everything just fell into place," he said. "I got the job that I'd always wanted and once I got it, I wanted to do the best I could possibly do."

After a difficult season, Corbin was looking for someone to come in and help the program get back to their winning ways and that's when Coach Archie Powers stepped in and took over the Redhounds in 1969.

"The first year we weren't too successful, that was in '68, and then in '69 Coach Powers was hired as the coach and that was when changes really started to occur in the program," Adams said. "We started off in '69 and had a tremendous football team — it was a big year for turning the football program around."

As an assistant coach, Adams led the JV team, the freshman team and

then helped on the varsity squad, as well, as he tried to learn as much as possible from Powers and those on the coaching staff.

"Coach Powers was just an absolute genius when it came to X's and O's in football and I just soaked it up like a sponge," he said.

During those years under Powers, Adams helped lead the Redhounds to two state titles and a state runner-up.

After Powers stepped down as head coach he recommended that Corbin hire Adams as head coach, which Adams said he will be forever grateful for that recommendation.

And in 1981, Adams took over the Redhounds as head coach.

That first year as head coach, Adams said he had an extremely young team after graduating around 20 seniors from the 1980 state championship team.

"When we started in '81, we were very young," Adams said. "We had good numbers but nobody had any experience, all of the starters had practically graduated. I want to say we had three starters from the '80 team back for '81 and two of those players got hurt early in the season. So, we had only one player come back from the '80 team and of course that was Greg Taylor and he might have been the best player that I've ever coached."

The following year, the Redhounds had trouble filling their schedule after gaining a reputation of being one of the most physical teams in the state.

"Word had got out in the state of Kentucky that if you play Corbin and

you're not used to that physical style of play, you might not be able to play that next week because of how physical we were," Adams said.

Adams said he had no choice but to play an extremely tough schedule and in 1982, the Redhounds had lost to 4A powerhouses Madison Central and Bryan Station, as well as Danville and Somerset.

"We played a really, really good schedule and lost some ball games but when it came district time, our kids were ready to play," Adams said.

After trailing Middlesboro at halftime in the district championship game, Adams said he saw the greatest half of football he'd ever seen out of his Redhounds to come back and defeat Middlesboro and eventually found themselves in the state championship game.

"Once we got by Middlesboro, every team we played after that we just dominated," Adams said.

The Redhounds went on to be named the 1982 State Champions after defeating Glasgow 18-6 in the finals.

Adams led the Redhounds to another state runner-up finish in 1990. And though he went on to coach at several other schools after his time at Corbin came to an end, Adams said nothing quite compared to coaching at his alma mater and he will always remain a Corbin Redhound at heart.

[https://www.thetimestribune.com/sports/larry-cotton-adams-serves-as-corbin-s-honorary-captain-during-game-against-pulaski/article\\_d07b9064-8f96-11e7-bd39-a37acc77f15c.html](https://www.thetimestribune.com/sports/larry-cotton-adams-serves-as-corbin-s-honorary-captain-during-game-against-pulaski/article_d07b9064-8f96-11e7-bd39-a37acc77f15c.html)

FEATURED

## Larry 'Cotton' Adams serves as Corbin's Honorary Captain during game against Pulaski

By Les Dixon Staff Writer  
Sep 2, 2017



**Former Corbin Redhound player and Coach Larry 'Cotton' Adams served as the Redhounds' Honorary Captain during Friday's game against Pulaski County.**

Photo by Darrin Spencer



CORBIN — One of the best individuals to play and coach football at Corbin High School attended Friday's Corbin/Pulaski County match-up at Campbell Field.

But it wasn't by coincidence.

Corbin coach Justin Haddix reached out to Redhound great Larry "Cotton" Adams to serve as the Redhounds' Honorary Captain for the highly-touted match-up and Adams obliged.

"I was delighted they thought of me," Adams said. "It's an honor without a doubt. There is a great remembrance of tradition that started before I played and coached here. We were able to carry on the tradition when I was coach, but the tradition at Corbin goes way back before I played or coached."

Corbin athletic director Andrew Roark said it was a no-brainer to have Adams return to Campbell Field.

"Coach Adams means so much to so many with our athletics and football program," Roark said. "He helped continue the tradition that still is moving forward today. Our team could not be where it is today without the sacrifice of folks like Coach Adams. He is a legend to us."

Corbin coach Justin Haddix echoed Roark's comments.

“I asked Cotton to be an Honorary Captain tonight,” he said. “He’s the last coach to win a state title here. I told him I hoped to unseat him on being the last coach to win a state title and he said, he hoped so, too.”

Adams said he was delighted when he was asked to serve as Corbin’s Honorary Captain. In 1960, Adams played on Corbin’s last undefeated team while participating on 1962’s state runner-up squad. He also spent 13 years as an assistant coach under coach Archie Powers.

During Adams’ years as an assistant coach, Corbin won the state title in both 1976 and 1980 and was runner-up in 1977. Adams was named head coach at Corbin in 1981 and guided the Redhounds to a state championship in 1982 and a state runner-up finish in 1990 while compiling an overall 114-46 record.

“It’s definitely a great honor for me to come back,” Adams said. “Just to watch the Redhounds play is an honor for me. It’s a program I love and I had a lot of great seasons and great memories here as a player and coach at Corbin.

“It was without a doubt a great 14 years here as head coach,” he added. “During the 80s and the early part of the 90s, we were a powerhouse. We played one of the toughest schedules in the state during those times. The 70s, 80s and 90s were a great time in Corbin. There were a lot of great wins and memories during that time.”

Adams said he continues to come watch the Redhounds play and cheers them on each game.



“I watch Corbin a lot,” he said. “I’ll go as long as it’s not too far away. If Corbin is at home, I’ll watch them play.

“I’ve been impressed with Coach (Justin) Haddix since he took over as coach,” Adams said. “I love what he does offensively. He is an outstanding coach. The kids love him and it thrills me to death to see the program in the great shape it is in. I’m also impressed with the defense, too. They have one of the most outstanding defensive teams that I’ve seen in a while. It reminds me of the defense of the 1976 team. That team had a great defense.”

Adams knows what it takes to be a state champion and he was quick to point out this year’s version of the Redhounds can make a state championship run.

“I most definitely do (believe Corbin can win the state title),” he said. “I’ve watched this program and the progress they have made since coach Haddix took over. The way they play both defense and offense is great, but they’ve got to close out the ball games. They’ve got to learn to close out the games. I’m just thrilled to be a part of what they’re doing. I’m just so impressed with this team and coaching staff and I’m excited to see what they can accomplish this season.”

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