

Former Darien star hired as Greenwich High School boys lacrosse coach

By Jesse Quinlan, Staff Writer

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A golden opportunity was knocking at the door, and now it was time for [Scott Bulkley](#) to make one of the hardest decisions of his life.

Torn between staying at Darien -- the town where he played and coached and currently lives and teaches -- or leaving for Greenwich High, Bulkley ultimately chose the chance to run his own program.

The [Greenwich High School](#) boys lacrosse team is glad he did. Bulkley, 37, was hired as the Cardinals new head coach late last week and will replace [Paul Burke](#), who resigned from the job in early February after being sentenced to six months in prison on drunken driving charges.

Bulkley has wasted little time acclimating himself to the program. He spent part of last weekend watching fifth and sixth grade Greenwich Youth Lacrosse travel team tryouts, and then made his way to the [SoNo Field House](#) in Norwalk, where several of Greenwich's varsity players compete in a winter high school league.

The first official day of spring practice, March 22, can't come soon enough.

"I'm extremely excited to coach at Greenwich," said Bulkley, who already knows some of his new players from their time together with the Connecticut Chargers, the state's elite summer team program.

"When the position opened up, some of the boys reached out to me and that really had an effect. I love Darien and the entire program is like a family to me, but its also been a dream of mine to become a head coach. I think the potential at Greenwich is unbelievable."

Just as the ready-made Cardinals seem like a perfect fit to Bulkley, the former [University of North Carolina](#) co-captain appears ideally suited for a Greenwich program that went a combined 89-31 during Burke's six years at the helm.

Let's see: An impressive resume? Check. A passion for the game? Definitely. And the support of his players? Bulkley's got that covered too.

"Scott's a very enthusiastic guy who has great experience as both a player and coach," Greenwich director of athletics [Gus Lindine](#) said. "He comes from a highly successful program and we're happy to have him."

Lindine said that "several" other candidates applied for the post. In the end, however, Greenwich's gain is rival Darien's loss.

Bulkley, who in 1991 became the first All-American in Darien history, spent the last six years on the [Blue Wave](#) staff under renowned coach [Jeff Brameier](#). Bulkley rose quickly at his alma mater, and was given free reign of a Darien defense that helped garner five straight CIAC Class M championships.

"Scott established himself quickly here, worked hard and is more than qualified for his new role," Brameier said. "He's had some great ideas and likes to be aggressive on defense. You always love to see former players go on and do great, and Scott has a chance to do that at Greenwich. They're a well-built program with a lot of athletes, so they should be right there the next couple of years. It was a great opportunity for him. The only negative really is that its a rival of ours."

The teams won't play until the regular-season finale in Darien on May 19. And while that showdown figures to be plenty emotional, it will be more of a healthy respect among coaches than hostility between rivals.

"Without a doubt I'm better prepared for this job because of Coach B," Bulkley said. "He's been an unbelievable mentor, friend and sounding board. I've called him every day to lean on, and I'm sure that will continue. The thing about Jeff is that more than anything, he's a huge advocate for Connecticut lacrosse. He knows that the more success we have at Greenwich, the more college coaches see our region in a positive light. That helps kids get scholarships to colleges."

Bulkley's scouting and keen eye for talent has paid dividends for several former FCIAC standouts, including Greenwich's [Jimmy Dunster](#) and Darien's [Chris Madalon](#). Both players are now starting for undefeated North Carolina -- Bulkley's alma mater and the third ranked team in the nation according to the most recent InsideLacrosse media poll.

"I love helping young men. And anytime I can help send the best and the brightest to North Carolina, I'll do it," Bulkley said with a laugh.

While Bulkley isn't quite ready to make any guarantees about records or titles, he is willing to promise an up-tempo style and a positive atmosphere.

"My goal is for us to play extremely hard and hustle all over the field," Bulkley said. "I want this to be fun and positive. I'm big about giving back, and I expect the older guys to give back to our youth program which I'll be very involved with."

As Bulkley has made clear to his players over the past week, it would be wise to get in shape now -- and not take playing time for granted.

"I used myself as an example and the message I tried to get across is that I was a short stick defensive middie, which is kind of like an offensive lineman in terms of glory, and I was still

elected captain by my college teammates," Bulkley said. "We're a family and everyone has their role. So when I told them every position was up for grabs, I meant it."