

# Herring named LBs coach, Barone OL

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ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — The Denver Broncos on Monday agreed to terms with Reggie Herring to be their linebackers coach and named Clancy Barone their offensive line coach, it was announced.

Herring, a 34-year coaching veteran with nine seasons of experience in the NFL ranks, previously coached linebackers with Houston (2002-03, '11-13), Dallas (2008-10) and Chicago (2014).

Before instructing linebackers with the Bears in 2014, Herring coached the unit under Broncos Head Coach Gary Kubiak in Houston from 2011-13.

In 2011, Herring's linebacker group accounted for 27 of the team's 44 sacks as the Texans ranked second in the NFL in total defense (285.7 ypg). Linebacker Brian Cushing earned second-team All-Pro honors from the Associated Press in 2011, and Connor Barwin transitioned from defensive end to outside linebacker and finished third in the AFC with 11.5 sacks.

Broncos defensive end DeMarcus Ware played outside linebacker under Herring from 2008-10 with the Cowboys and ranked first in the NFL with 46.5 sacks during that span. Ware led the NFL in sacks twice (2008, '10) under Herring, including a career-best 20 quarterback takedowns in 2008.

Herring, who began his NFL career as linebackers coach for the Texans from 2002-03, also owns 25 years of coaching experience at the collegiate level. He served as defensive coordinator and linebackers coach for the University of Arkansas from 2005-07 following coaching stops at North Carolina State (2004), Clemson (1994-2001), Texas Christian (1992-93), Auburn (1986-91) and Oklahoma State (1981-85).

A three-year starter at linebacker for Florida State from 1978-80, Herring was born on July 3, 1959, in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Barone enters his seventh season with the Broncos in 2015 and returns to coach the offensive line, a group he previously worked with for the club in 2010.

A 28-year coaching veteran, Barone spent five seasons (2009, '11-14) instructing tight ends for the Broncos after coaching that position for the San Diego Chargers (2007-08) and Atlanta Falcons (2005-06) in his previous two NFL stops.

Barone spent his first 17 years working with offensive lines at the collegiate level before beginning his NFL coaching career with the Falcons in 2004 as their assistant offensive line coach.

# **Broncos agree to terms with Reggie Herring as LB coach; Richard Smith to join Falcons**

The Denver Post

Mike Klis

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The Broncos agreed to terms with Reggie Herring to be their linebackers coach, the team announced Monday. Herring takes over for Richard Smith, who accepted a senior defensive position with the Atlanta Falcons.

Herring, a 34-year coaching veteran, was previously the linebackers coach in Houston (2002-03, 2011-13), Dallas (2008-10) and Chicago (2014).

In his second stint in Houston, he worked under Gary Kubiak, the Broncos' new head coach. In 2011, the Texans' linebackers accounted for 27 of the team's 44 sacks as Houston finished second in the league in total defense (285.7 yards per game).

Herring also has 25 years of collegiate coaching experience, with stops at Oklahoma State (1981-85), Auburn (1986-91), Texas Christian (1992-93), Clemson (1994-2001), North Carolina State (2004) and Arkansas (2005-07).

Smith just completed his eighth season overall with the Broncos, in separate stints, and has worked for seven different NFL teams over the years. He worked with the Broncos' linebackers and special teams from 1993-96 before returning in January 2011 as the linebackers coach.

He was previously the Panthers' linebackers coach (2009-10) under then coach John Fox, and has also served as the Texans' defensive coordinator (2006-08), under Kubiak.

# Herring tackles linebacker questions

By Eli Kaberon  
ChicagoBears.com  
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Inside the office of Bears linebackers coach Reggie Herring, right above his desk, is a piece of paper. At the top of it, in big letters, it reads TACKLING. Under that is a list of the proper ways a player should tackle, from how they position their body before contact to the correct way to bring an opponent to the ground.

In this week's Coaches Corner, ChicagoBears.com spoke with Herring about the way the team practices tackling, how rule changes have impacted the position and what a pair of the team's linebackers do so well.

How do mobile quarterbacks, such as Cam Newton of the Panthers, present problems for the linebacking corps?

Well any time you face a quarterback with Cam's size, mobility, arm-strength as well as leg strength – his ability to win with his legs and his arm – is a dual threat and a concern for anybody playing defense.

Will previous experience facing mobile quarterbacks this season help your unit this coming week?

Well they are all unique in their own right and they all have different ways they handle pressure, the way they move in the pocket. They all have different ways when they drop back, the ability to go to the second or third receiver, or stare down the main one. They are all different in that way.

Right now, obviously the type of player (Newton) is, we have faced those guys the first couple of games. I think it helps in the sense of awareness of his ability to move and create with his legs. At the same time, they have weapons at wide receiver and at running back with (DeAngelo) Williams. It's not just the quarterback, the tight end (Greg) Olsen is a really good player that they use effectively; he is one of their favorite targets along with (Kelvin) Benjamin, (Jerricho) Cotchery and (Jason) Avant. At the end of the day, quarterbacks with his tool set always present problems. And it is a challenge week to week. You can talk about what you're going to do, but it's going to come down to reactionary and how we react and adjust throughout the game.

You have a sign in your office that talks about the importance of tackling properly. How do you practice tackling without putting your players or the offensive players at risk of getting hurt?

There's a lot of people that just don't really understand what tackling involves. When you get down to the basic fundamental roots of tackling, it's not just the physical contact. There's a lot more than the contact itself. So if you're in practice, whether you are tackling full speed or not, we are constantly working on tackling every snap. Whether it be an inside-out angle bringing square pads, leverage, bringing your feet with you, putting yourself in a position to make that tackle. We have to practice that on every snap.

It's no different than putting a putter, that if you hit the ball or not, lining it up to where you are going to actually hit it, you have to work on that. At the end of the day, we work on it every snap. Pursuit angles, play away, in-the-hole tackling, out-in-space tackling, balls thrown. Seven-on-seven is a great fundamental tool when we go versus receivers with no linemen. Your break angles, leverage to the ball, presenting your body in a position to make the tackle with leverage and balance.

All those things are reactionary and adjusting off movement that the offense presents you. That's as big a part of tackling as just hitting a person. So what I just said was, we work on tackling every day and we demand, because we are not taking to the ground live, we demand from our players that every snap is a potential tackle snap where everybody is perusing, everybody is getting to the ball in a football position. At the end of the day, there's a lot more to tackling than just hitting people. So we work on tackling every snap, every day. You have to in the NFL, because we can't beat up on each other.

Given recent rule changes on how players are allowed to tackle, does that impact your coaching philosophy?

Obviously you don't go out practicing car wrecks or walking in the middle of the street. You tell your children to study when they get home, they don't study, they get F's. When they get here, Day One, they are taught the proper way to tackle. The target, the framework. We work on it as a team. We have a certain way we do things.

It's still a game of balance, leverage with your head up – nobody has ever taught head down. The proper way is the top of the shoulder pad, near foot near shoulder, coil your body, lower your leverage and hips, clamp and accelerate through your man with your feet.

Every day rules change, we must adapt and adjust. I don't think tackling has really changed. The only thing they have done is try to take the head out of it. And to be honest with you, the head has never really been a part of the teaching. It's just kind of happened. There are certain things you can't take the head out of, like when a running back is running at you full speed and he's ducking his head and the defender lowers his shoulder. The head is connected to the shoulder, by the way. Have you ever tried to stick your shoulders through a door without your head? People don't think about that. The rules, what they've changed, is they have taken away opportunities to make vicious hits for the benefits and the safety of the player. They haven't really changed the way to hit. We never taught to hit with the crown of the helmet or to launch at a guy's head.

Looking at Bears personnel, where has Jon Bostic improved over the course of the season?

I think the big thing is that he's learned to tempo himself. He's learning with experience how to slow himself down. To some extent he was almost too quick and reactionary. He has tremendous amount of instincts and sees things a lot faster than the play itself is developing. So therefore he can get ahead of himself. Or, he has a tendency to be looking at too many things and not looking at the right thing.

At the end of the day, without over-analyzing a simple thing called instincts and reacting to the ball, I just think he's learned to tempo himself. He's trained his eyes. He is playing with more square pad to the line of scrimmage, hand usage. And like I said, tempo and his keys to where he's putting himself in the right position more than he's putting himself in the wrong. So you train that every day in your drills, and he's bought in. He's always had excellent linebacker tool set, it's just a matter of time that he's growing up. He's getting better as we go, but he's not there yet. It's a process and he's progressing in a good way.

His production is up, his reactionary is getting better and it goes back to experience, goes back to practicing and seeing things. Slowing things down, for him, was a good thing, because he'd get ahead of himself.

Lance Briggs sometimes gets forgotten in the history of Bears linebackers, though he deserves to be mentioned. What makes him so good, especially for the defensive scheme you are running now? The big thing with Lance is instincts. You know, he has excellent instincts. He's always been quick and has the burst to close and has a good punch. He has a good power punch in his body, which you have to have to be effective. The one thing that I've seen since I've been here is really, to me, what sets him above most linebackers is his coverage instincts. He has a good feel for the passing game, our concepts. He understands coverage, good anticipation and awareness. And that is the thing I've been most impressed with is his ability to play coverage and do a really good job. At the end of the day, he's very productive, can play the run or the pass and is very balanced.

# Linebackers coach Reggie Herring molding Bears' future

By Rich Campbell  
Chicago Tribune  
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Adam Herring figured his dad would kill him, and his mom figured he was right. So he waited about four weeks to deliver the news.

Reggie Herring's aversion to tattoos is surpassed only by his dislike for losing football games. Adam had been threatened throughout his life with the consequences of ever coming home sporting one.

So it was with great trepidation that he removed his shirt that day in 2007 to show his parents his souvenir from a night out with his fellow Auburn University football recruits. It was time to face the music for what, in a fleeting moment, seemed like a cool idea.

Blood rushed to Reggie's face. His neck bulged.

"Adam couldn't have gotten a bigger font," Lisa Herring, Reggie's wife, recalled with a laugh.

But then Reggie took a closer look. Inked around the base of Adam's neck was this proverb: He who hesitates is lost.

With Reggie, every day was sunshine. Every day was the greatest day of his life that he got to walk around the field and play football.

- Cris Collinsworth, NFL analyst and Herring's former high school teammate

Standing between fields at Bears training camp in Bourbonnais after practice last week, Reggie pumped his fist in satisfaction as he described Adam's big reveal.

"When he came home with that, I couldn't even be mad," he said, smiling.

The words tattooed on Adam's neck are Reggie's life motto. He learned it from coach Bobby Bowden while playing at Florida State in the late 1970s, and he has applied it at every college and NFL destination on a 33-year coaching journey that led him in January to Halas Hall.

After the worst defensive season in Bears history, the team hired Herring to coach its linebackers. The importance of his role extends beyond rebuilding the defense. Two of the Bears' most valued prospects play linebacker, so Herring, in a way, has a chunk of the team's future in his hands.

This summer at training camp, Herring's passion for football, intense competitiveness, contagious energy and sense of humor have invigorated a linebacking corps determined to restore its reputation.

"He's in his element with the young players," Lisa said. "I don't think he has ever been happier in coaching. He has got such talent in the professional athletes, but the youth he can teach and mold is right up his alley. That's the part of college coaching that he has missed. He's right where he needs to be."

'Mr. Intensity'

Herring's twang sounded among the Bears linebackers Wednesday as they walked through their responsibilities against various running plays. Upside-down trash cans served as the offensive linemen.

"Stay tight! Right there, Bos. Good," Herring said to Jon Bostic, the second-round draft pick in 2013, whom the Bears expect to be a cornerstone of future success.

"He's blocking the damn can! Do it again!" Herring yelled later when the second string got it wrong.

Joe Kim delivers goods for Bears defense's moves

Joe Kim delivers goods for Bears defense's moves

Herring, 55, can't pinpoint the root of his competitiveness and drive. But if he had to guess, it's the positive reinforcement that resulted from winning as a young athlete.

He was a multisport star in a family that included two brothers and three sisters. His father, Bill, was a chief master sergeant in the Air Force. That required the family to move constantly, which, as it turned out, got Herring acclimated to a downside of life as a coach before he embarked on that career path.

Herring lived in Orlando, Michigan's Upper Peninsula and California before he moved to Titusville, Fla., in the 11th grade. When he joined the Astronaut High School football team, the star quarterback was Cris Collinsworth, who went on to play receiver for the Bengals and now is the analyst for NBC's "Sunday Night Football" telecasts.

"Unfortunately for all of us, it wasn't even close — he was so much the best-looking guy in the school," Collinsworth cracked.

Herring excelled in baseball and basketball, but he shined even brighter in football. His physical presence on both sides of the ball helped him earn a scholarship to play linebacker at Florida State. He also had something extra that stood out to teammates.

"He was Mr. Intensity before that was the cool thing to be," Collinsworth said. "He was born to coach. In football, passion sells. It's hard to go to practice every day. Something hurts all the time or it's hot or the pads stink. Football is a lifestyle of 'something is wrong.'"

"With Reggie, every day was sunshine. Every day was the greatest day of his life that he got to walk around the field and play football."

Herring was a team captain at Florida State, led the team in tackles for three seasons and became a member of the school's athletic Hall of Fame in 1989. He was a second-team All-American as a senior.

But while teammates as accomplished as Herring trained for the NFL draft, he never hesitated in pursuing his true ambition.

"I didn't care (about the NFL)," Herring said. "I wanted to get into coaching. I always wanted to coach, and I was beat up, tired."

Making connections

Long before Adam Herring got a tattoo, he learned the fundamentals of playing linebacker from his dad.

"Everyone can learn different schemes and where you're supposed to be, but it's what you do at the point of attack, whether you're taking on a block or tackling," said Adam, now a special assistant for defense at the University of Texas.

Reggie Herring's emphasis on techniques and fundamentals helps define his coaching style. It's why the Bears sought him to develop players such as Bostic and converted defensive end Shea McClellin — the team's first-round pick in 2012 — as part of a defensive rebuild.

"He's a real football coach who's not trying to trick anybody — it's fundamentals and technique," Bears defensive line coach Paul Pasqualoni said. "He's teaching all marketable skills. And when players believe that what you're teaching is going to help them be a better player and is going to help them learn their craft, players believe in you."

That belief seems to have strengthened the connection between Herring and his players through six months on the job. They have responded well to his energetic personality and his methods.

"Extreme passion," McClellin said. "He makes you want to hit people and just love the game of football."

The Bears' experienced linebackers feel similarly. Seven-time Pro Bowl selection Lance Briggs and 10-year veteran D.J. Williams have praised Herring's "old-school" approach.

"He's not telling you X's and O's off a board," Williams said. "He's telling you through life experiences, what he has been through."

"He wants his linebackers to be tough, downhill type of guys. He wants us to be physical. He's going to challenge you every day, and it doesn't matter whether you're a 12-year vet or a rookie. He's going to be harping on you every day because he wants the best out of you."

Said Briggs: "For me, it feels right."

But it's not all whip cracking. Herring's sharp wit keeps players engaged. During meetings, he'll mention Instagram, Twitter and other social elements or trends to which today's players relate. Herring also has a cache of "old-school ball stories," Williams said. "Those aren't built for a tape recorder."

For Herring, preparation is the key to developing this group of linebackers. Being prepared means not having to hesitate.

"As long as you have a blueprint plan for that and you know what you're talking about, you meet together and you become something really good," he said. "Right now I don't see anybody that's fighting it, unless they'd rather sell straw hats in Tahiti."

On the contrary, Bourbonnais was a linebacker's paradise Friday.

The defense flew around the field during team drills. Briggs batted down two passes, one of which was intercepted. In red-zone drills, Bostic tightly covered running back Michael Ford as Ford ran toward the front right pylon. That helped force an incompletion that ended the series in the defense's favor.

Fans at training camp usually cheer for the offense, and they grumbled at the failure to score.

That made Herring smile. He turned to the crowd and cupped his ear with his hand, his competitive juices overflowing. His men had won.

A moment later, he turned and jogged toward the opposite sideline and the next drill. Without hesitation.

# Herring eager to work with young LBS

By Larry Mayer  
ChicagoBears.com  
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As he takes over as Bears linebackers coach, Reggie Herring is eager to begin working with promising young 2013 draft picks Jon Bostic and Khaseem Greene.

"The key to developing young guys No. 1 is patience," Herring told ChicagoBears.com in a video interview. "But you have to give them a plan. They have to have a plan and you have to be persistent and you have to have a goal."

"We've watched them on film. There's enough skill set or tool box for these linebackers that eventually we think we can get them to a level where they can be productive players. They have the ability."

Bostic and Greene both became starters as rookies after injuries sidelined veterans Lance Briggs and D.J. Williams. The two young players showed promise, but neither performed at a consistent level.

Bostic, a second-round choice from Florida, registered 75.5 tackles, 4.5 tackles-for-loss, one sack, one interception and one forced fumble. Greene, a fourth-round choice from Rutgers, had 38.5 tackles, 0.5 tackles-for-loss, one interception and one forced fumble.

The Bears are hopeful that Herring will get the most out of them. The 54-year-old joins the Bears after spending the last six seasons as a linebackers coach with the Cowboys (2008-10) and Texans (2011-13). He also had a prior stint as linebackers coach with the Texans in 2002-03.

In 2011, Herring helped Brian Cushing earn second-team All-Pro honors after leading the team with 114 tackles. That season, Connor Barwin moved from defensive end to outside linebacker and tied for third in the AFC with a team-high 11.5 sacks.

During Herring's three seasons as Cowboys linebackers coach, DeMarcus Ware led the NFL with 46.5 sacks. Ware led the NFL with 20 sacks in 2008, the second most by a linebacker in a single season behind only Lawrence Taylor's 20.5 for the Giants in 1986.

Herring also has 25 years of experience as a college assistant at Oklahoma State (1981-85), Auburn (1986-91), TCU (1992-93), Clemson (1994-2001), North Carolina State (2004) and Arkansas (2005-07).