

Doug Socha welcomes challenge of building Keiser football program

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Allow Doug Socha to reintroduce himself.

After a year spent as an offensive assistant for the NFL's Buffalo Bills, Socha, the former Oxbridge Academy and American Heritage head coach, is back in Palm Beach County as the newly introduced head coach of the fledgling Keiser University football team, the school officially announced Wednesday.

"Something like this has been on my mind for a long time, since coming down here when I was a college coach and seeing these different universities that didn't have football," Socha said. "I knew that one would pop up, and I would certainly want to take a look at that opportunity."

The Seahawks intend to start playing in the NAIA's Sun Conference in 2018, giving Socha about 18 months to build the program. He was also the first head coach at Oxbridge and led the team to 28-6 record in three years, winning two independent titles and a district crown, but [the program forfeited its wins from the 2014-15 and 2015-16 seasons](#) to avoid a punishment from the [Florida High School Athletic Association](#).

One benefit Socha mentioned about taking the Keiser job was his being able to move back home. Socha spent the football season in Buffalo while his family remained in Palm Beach County. His son, Cade, plays football for Oxbridge, and his daughter, Camryn, plays soccer.

"That was part of the decision, absolutely," he said. "It made it an easier transition to not have to move."

One of Socha's first tasks will be getting players into the program. Luckily for him, Keiser is on the northern end of the hottest recruiting territory in football — Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties are known for producing top-tier football players.

However, as a new program in the NAIA, the Seahawks don't have the profile of the other major schools in Florida, or even of county neighbor Florida Atlantic, which made waves in December by hiring former USC and Tennessee head coach [Lane Kiffin](#).

Socha said he likely would not be going after a lot of the same players as Kiffin, but he hoped to still find athletes who could play at a high level.

"It's scholarship football, so we're going to go out and find kids that are scholarship-type athletes," he said. "There's so many down here that may or may not be an inch or two short to go to FAU or those bigger programs.

"We're going to get out there on the road. I don't think we're going to recruit against anyone close by, the bigger schools. So we're not too worried about that."

Socha will also have to fill out his coaching staff, which he said has garnered "a ton of interest." The new coach has deep roots in the area, so the possibility of hiring coaches away from local high schools is there. Socha said Wednesday that three coaches would join his staff next week, after their contracts are finalized.

"Everyone's going to have ties to South Florida," Socha said. "Everyone's going to have a tie to Palm Beach County, for the most part."

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