

## I've got the job for Phillip Fulmer

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Call it karma. Call it right place, right time.

Could former Tennessee and recently inducted Hall of Fame football coach Phillip Fulmer return to the coaching stage?

He was in Johnson City last week, speaking at a Boys & Girls Club fundraiser.

Fulmer has been out of coaching since being let go by Tennessee in 2008. He never saw it as the end of his career, but the years have gone by and there have been no solid offers land on Fulmer's desk.

"I've always said I would coach again if the right opportunity presented itself," Fulmer told the *Johnson City Press*.  
"I would coach again, but it would have to be a real unique situation."

Unique? I've got that one covered, Coach.

Like Fulmer, East Tennessee State has been out of football. The then-president dropped the sport in 2003, citing financial reasons.

Things have changed at the state school. They have a new president in Dr. Brian Noland. He is said to be a high energy visionary and bringing back the football program is a priority for him.

Imagine if Noland stepped to a press conference podium and announced the school will reinstate the football program and the new coach will be Phillip Fulmer.

The initial response would be resounding. It would make national news and allow alumni and fans across the country to support it financially.

It would get Fulmer's competitive juices flowing again. By not coaching since 2008, Fulmer knows just how much he misses the aspects of coaching that get in your blood. Once a football coach, always a football coach.

It's not far from his present home in Maryville. He would be mentoring college athletes on a college campus. That's a pretty effective way to stay young.

If Fulmer has the burning desire and passion it would take to resume coaching, recruiting, traveling, he would be the man for the job.

Fulmer is younger than 73-year-old Kansas State coach Bill Snyder, younger than 67-year-old South Carolina coach Steve Spurrier. Their teams were 11-2 this season. South Carolina finished No. 8 in the final AP poll and Kansas State was No. 12.

When he was inducted into the National Football Foundation's College Football Hall of Fame recently, the 62-year-old Fulmer quipped: "I'm graciously accepting it, but I'm too dang young."

A return to coaching would be Fulmer's Fountain of Youth. The Winchester native knows the state and was once regarded as one of the best recruiting head coaches in the game. He is still a high profile name in football.

East Tennessee State would be an attractive school for football recruits that don't quite measure up to the BCS conference players.

Atlanta Falcons Coach Mike Smith played at ETSU, having been recruited out of Daytona Beach Father Lopez.

Johnson City has always been a Tennessee fan base and a suitcase school. The ETSU Dome has been renovated, but they need to build a new facility. It is an antiquated dome that really never caught on with fans.

"I'm really anxious to watch the progression of this. I was really sad when they dropped football. ... I look forward to seeing if they are really serious about moving forward," Fulmer said in the *Johnson City Press* article.

As an ETSU alumnus, I think it would be a win-win for both parties.

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