



Former CIS Coach of the Year Named Defensive Coordinator and Academic Coach

UBC Thunderbirds head coach [Shawn Olson](#) is pleased to name Jerry Friesen as the program's full time assistant coach, defensive coordinator, and academic coach. Friesen, a former CIS Coach of the Year, brings a wealth of experience from over 25 years of coaching in the CIS and CFL.

"I'm excited to be back coaching in the CIS especially the Canada West," said Jerry Friesen. "I'm looking forward to working with the student-athletes and making sure they have a great experience contributing to the 'Thunderbirds' program."



A native of Rosthern, Saskatchewan, Friesen most recently coached with the Saskatchewan Roughriders (2011) prior to 10 years as head coach of the University of Alberta Golden Bears (2001-10). He compiled a record of 36-43-1 over the 10 regular seasons with the Golden Bears and a playoff record of 4-5. He twice led Alberta to 7-1 regular seasons and to three straight Hardy Cup Finals (2003-05). In 2004 he won the Frank Tindall trophy as the CIS Coach of the Year.

"We are very fortunate to have Jerry join our staff," said UBC head coach [Shawn Olson](#). "His extensive experience in the Canada West is a huge asset and I look forward to working with him in preparation for the 2013 season."

"Coach Olson has established a solid foundation with this program and I believe there is a very high ceiling," said Friesen. "The Thunderbirds have some young athletic players and I am looking forward to working with them, the rest of the coaching staff and contributing to the success of the program"

During his playing days Friesen played linebacker with the Saskatoon Hilltops before moving on to the University of Saskatchewan where he was a two time All-Canadian. From there he played eight years in the CFL, three with the Montreal Alouettes and five seasons with his home province Saskatchewan Roughriders.

Friesen joined the coaching ranks when he retired as a player returning to his alma mater as the team's defensive coordinator and helping them to their first Vanier Cup championship in 1990. After a year with the Roughriders in 1996, he became assistant coach with the University of Calgary in 1997 before taking the Alberta job in 2001.

The 57 year old is a member of the University of Saskatchewan Huskies Wall of Fame and was enshrined in the Saskatoon Sports Hall of Fame in 2008.

Coaching Timeline

1986-95	University of Saskatchewan, Assistant Coach
1996	Saskatchewan Roughriders, Assistant Coach
1997-2000	University of Calgary, Assistant Coach
2001-2010	University of Alberta, Head Coach
2011	Saskatchewan Roughriders, Assistant Coach

Thoughts From Head Coach Shawn Olson

We had over 85 applicants for the Defensive coordinator position, from all over North America. At least 15 were very high quality candidates, eight of which had previous head coaching experience. After we went through the interview process it became clear that Coach Friesen's combination of experience, intelligence, ability to teach and educational background was the perfect fit for what I was looking for to lead what I envision to be an aggressive and dominant defense in the Canada West. The plan is to build a simple but very strong foundation defensively over the spring practices and then use movement along our 40 front and a combination of man and zone pressures to dictate a little bit more to offenses in our conference. He is already at work for this weeks practices and brings a lot of positive energy to the field that has already provided a noticeable change.

His over 25 years of experience in the Canada West and as a defensive coordinator is a serious positive in allowing us to immediately take huge leap in productivity. I also expect his 10 years experience as a head coach in the Canada West will be an invaluable resource to the efficiency of every part of our program.

Jerry has many Vancouver ties that will make his transition easier. His mother and sister have resided in the lower mainland for the last decade.

Coach Friesen will also serve as our Academic Coach and spearhead our academic program in conjunction with the Athletic Departments new Academic Coordinator Joanna Hunter. He has just finished his Masters in Leadership and Education and has expressed passion for taking our academic retention programs to another level.