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[Fairhope](http://highschoolsports.al.com/school/fairhope-fairhope/boysbasketball/) principal Jon Cardwell has been trying to lure Kerry Edwards to his school for a dozen years.

He finally made it happen.

Cardwell announced Friday that Edwards is the Pirates’ new varsity boys basketball coach. He replaces Spencer Segrest, who stepped down after just a year. Cardwell said Segrest is still teaching at the school and pursuing an administration degree.

Edwards spent the past eight years coaching at Foley Middle School. He led that team to back-to-back Baldwin County championships.

“I’ve known him for a long time,” Cardwell said. “He’s a man of great character and great integrity. He already lives in this community. He’s just a heck of a guy.”

Edwards, a South Alabama graduate, has been coaching basketball for more than 18 years at various levels. His stops have included J. Larry Newton Middle School and [Daphne High](http://highschoolsports.al.com/school/daphne-daphne/boysbasketball/). He coached the DHS junior varsity and was a varsity assistant under Cedric Yelding.

“Kerry has always been good with kids,” Cardwell said. “Everyone always wants to focus on Xs and Ox, but there is a lot more to coaching, especially at the high school level. You have to know and understand the kids. Kerry is the right man for the job.”

Cardwell said he interviewed six “top notch” candidates before settling on Edwards.

“I feel honored and blessed to come back to Fairhope High School and coach basketball,” Edwards said. “Fairhope has always had a very proud history for athletics and academics. The community is great in Fairhope and very supportive. I am thrilled to be back coaching here.”

Edwards said his team goals would be simple.

“We will have fun, play hard and compete to the best of our ability every time we play,” he said. “We want to be winners on the court, in the classroom and in life. My coaching style is neither to intimidate or degrade players, but instead to encourage them and to concentrate on strategies and fundamentals.”

Edwards is the third head coach in as many years for the Pirates. He follows Robby Robertson, who is now the head coach at Coastal Alabama Community College, and Segrest.

Hampered by an early injury to Philip Martin, the Pirates struggled last year even with two-time first-team selection and Murray State signee Tevin Brown leading the way.