

New England Patriots Hire Former Buckeye Mike Vrabel As Head Coach



Image via Nick Cammett/Diamond Images/Getty Images

Former Ohio State defensive lineman and assistant coach Mike Vrabel will return to the New England Patriots to serve as the franchise's 16th head coach, the Patriots announced on Sunday.

He's back!

Patriots Hall of Famer Mike Vrabel returns to New England as our 16th head coach.
pic.twitter.com/a3r7IQNzvK

— New England Patriots (@Patriots) January 12, 2025

Vrabel, 49, returns to the NFL head coaching ranks on a reported multi-year contract just over one year after being fired as head coach of the Tennessee Titans, where he went 54-45 in six seasons while leading the team to three playoff appearances. Although he did garner some head coaching interest from teams last offseason, he spent all of this season as a coaching and personnel consultant with the Cleveland Browns.

But things heated back up for Vrabel this offseason when multiple teams interviewed him for their head coaching vacancy, including his former team in the Patriots, who, after firing Jerod Mayo after just one season (4-13 record) in the head coaching chair, brought Vrabel in for an interview on Thursday.

Just three days after that interview, Vrabel returns to the franchise he spent eight lucrative seasons with from 2001-2008, a span in which he was a key part in the early part of the Patriots dynasty where they won Super Bowls in 2001, 2003 and 2004. He racked up 606 tackles (55 for loss), 48 sacks, 34 pass deflections, 13 forced fumbles and 11 interceptions during his tenure with the Patriots, a stat line that helped him earn an induction into the franchise's Hall of Fame this past summer.

Vrabel, who played from Ohio State from 1993-1996 — winning Big Ten Defensive Lineman of the Year in 1995 and 1996 — and coached with the Buckeyes from 2011-13, will now attempt to thrust New England back into relevance in the National Football league after three consecutive losing seasons.

Since Tom Brady left New England and signed with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 2020, the Patriots have gone a combined 33-51 with just one playoff appearance in 2021. They finished with a 4-13 record in consecutive seasons, a poor stretch that did allow them to draft quarterback Drake Maye with the third overall pick in last year's draft.

The Patriots have the fourth overall pick in the 2025 NFL draft.