

Vincent settles into latest Hounds role

Features News

Riverhounds Staff

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Hounds assistant coach Rob Vincent stands between lines of players during the team's warm-ups for

the match against Indy Eleven on June 1 at Highmark Stadium. (Photo: Chris Cowger/Riverhounds SC)

In a word, **Rob Vincent** can be described as versatile.

Vincent not only demonstrated this versatility while playing professionally in Pittsburgh and MLS, but also in his transition this season from coaching for the Riverhounds Academy to becoming an assistant coach for the Hounds' pro team.

A Liverpool, England, native, Vincent attended the University of Charleston in West Virginia, becoming a Division II All-American in each of his four years playing collegiately. He signed his first pro contract with the Riverhounds in 2013, and in his three years for the club, he went from playing as a holding midfielder to becoming, at the time, the leading regular-season scorer in the club's modern era. As of 2024, he is seventh in team history with 29 goals in his 89 appearances.

Vincent made the jump to MLS in 2016, playing for D.C. United. He played 23 total games with a pair of goals for D.C. United, including a playoff appearance in 2016, before retiring after the 2017 season. After a successful playing career, Vincent returned to Pittsburgh to advance as a coach. Now on the pro team's coaching staff, he is ready to win.

His experience as a player clearly contributes to his coaching approach and doesn't go unnoticed by head coach **Bob Lilley**.

"I mean, he is a very good player, smart player. He could play multiple positions. I think he understands the game in different ways, having been a versatile player. He's definitely a student of the game," Lilley said when asked what stands out about his newest assistant.

Vincent joined the Academy staff in 2018, helping to grow the game of soccer in Pittsburgh, but also growing his own understanding of the game.

"I think it was a super valuable six years that I spent with the Academy, because I went from playing, and I think when you are a player, you think you know a lot more than you do about the game," Vincent said.

“You think you know or have it all figured out, and when you start coaching, you realize there’s a lot of little, intricate details that either players don’t know or they need to be reminded of.”

During his time with the Academy, where he coached some of the club’s ECNL Girls teams, Vincent was dedicated to developing players and helping to advance toward their individual goals.



Rob

Vincent sets up before the Hounds’ match June 1 against Indy Eleven. (Photo: Ryan Shaffer/Riverhounds SC)

“The focus at the Academy is developing players and getting them ready for college,” Vincent said. “For a lot of players, the dream is not necessarily, or the end goal is not to play pro, but they want to learn, develop, and be a part of a team. Maybe play in college, maybe play professionally, but the focus is a little different there.”

In 2021, Vincent asked to come work with the Hounds' pro team as he worked toward getting his U.S. Soccer coaching license. During that process, he caught the attention of Lilley as he was filmed working with the pro players and leading training sessions.

“(Sporting Director) **Dan Visser** and I thought he did a good job with that. So when we got in (last) offseason, Dan was looking to make a move to the executive side rather than an assistant coach,” Lilley said of the change to his staff. “It was a pretty quick decision. We both felt Rob could handle it.”

The transition from coaching at the Academy to the professional team meant understanding a change in focus. When working with players earlier in their development, it's about making moves that will lead to success later down the road. Coaching professionals means finding a way to win every week.

Vincent takes what he learned from developing players and uses it to guide his coaching at the USL Championship level.

“The pressure is a bit higher but the game is still the same,” Vincent said. “We are still trying to influence players where you can, give them little bits of information where you can. And then, obviously, assisting Bob with his day-to-day, with his decision making and training sessions. So it's been interesting. It's been fun. I'm still learning a lot and have a lot to learn, but it has been good so far.”

Now with the professional team, Vincent is ready to win. He acknowledges the struggles the team has faced but isn't discouraged. Instead, he is fueled by the potential the team exhibits and wants to focus on creating winning habits.

“I think the aim right now is to find consistency more often than not. You know if we are doing that 85 to 90 percent of the time, then we know the results are going to start to flip in our favor a little bit more,” Vincent said. “We've shown it here, just probably not enough right now, but I think there's something to be excited about if we can find our feet and string some wins and results together.”

*Feature by Riverhounds contributor **Jameson Keebler***