



2007-08 UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COYOTE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

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Ryun Williams Named the 10th Women's Basketball Head Coach at USD

The former Wayne State coach, who played at South Dakota, replaces Chad Lavin who retired after 14 seasons at The U

VERMILLION, S.D. -- Ryun Williams, the winningest women's basketball coach in Wayne State (Neb.) history and former Coyote men's basketball player, has been named the 10th head women's basketball coach in the history of The University of South Dakota. Director of Athletics Joel Nielsen announced the hiring of Williams, who will replace the retiring Chad Lavin, this afternoon.

The University has scheduled a 2:00 p.m., press conference on Tuesday, April 8 to introduce Williams as the new women's basketball coach.

Lavin, who was the head coach at USD for 14 seasons and was a head coach for a total of 26 seasons, announced his retirement before the start of the 2007-08 season. After announcing his retirement, Lavin guided the Coyotes on an unforgettable run to the NCAA Division II national championship game. Prior to the start of the Elite Eight, he was named the Russell Athletic/WBCA NCAA Division II Women's Basketball Coach of the Year as the team finished the season 33-2.

"USD is very excited to be able to hire a coach of Ryun's quality to guide the women's basketball program into NCAA Division I," said Nielsen. "Coach Williams will be a great addition to the Coyote family. He understands what it means to be a Coyote after earning his bachelor's and master's degree here, playing for coach Dave Boots and serving as an assistant coach."

In his 10 seasons at Wayne State, Williams took over a program that had won just 13 games the previous two seasons and turned it into an NCAA Tournament team. His team's recorded 20 wins or more in three of the last four seasons and made appearances in the NCAA Division II North Central Region tournament in two of the last three seasons. While at Wayne State, he compiled a 181-105 record (.632) and became the winningest women's basketball coach in school history.

"South Dakota is an outstanding University with so much to offer, this was a very tough decision," said Williams. "Wayne State is an incredible place with incredible players and people, but this opportunity to lead my alma mater, an opportunity that my family and I are extremely grateful for. The University of South Dakota is the right place for us to be and we could not be more excited to come back to the place that gave us our start. I have the utmost respect for coach Lavin, who has been a great friend over the years and it is a privilege to take over his team and build on the momentum he established. I can't wait to get to work and coach the heck out of this team."

This past season he guided the Wildcats to a 21-9 record, which included a trip to the NCAA Tournament. In the first round of the North Central Region he led his team to an 85-78 upset of North Dakota for the first win in the NCAA Tournament in the school's history. In 2005-06, Williams took Wayne State to its first-ever trip to the NCAA Tournament, as the team notched its best season in school history by going 27-4. They were 13-1 in NSIC play and won the NSIC Tournament to earn automatic berth to the NCAA Tournament. That season Williams was named the NSIC Coach of the Year.

Williams' players have received plenty of postseason recognition. Nicole Gruntorad was named WBCA All-American honorable mention, NSIC Player of the Year and NSIC Tournament MVP in 2006. Two players earned NSIC Defensive Player of the Year honors. Allison Steffen won the award in 2006 and Dodie Martin won it in 2003. Karen Hochstein was named the league's Newcomer of the Year in 2000 and just recently Jodie Boss won the newcomer of the year award in 2008.

Prior to the 27-win season in 2005-06, the Wildcats went 20-11 in 2004-05. It marked just the second time the WSC history that the women's program compiled back-to-back 20-win seasons. In his first year with the Wildcats, Williams put together a 15-12 record, which was the program's first winning campaign in four years. In just his second season, he guided the team to a 19-9 record. At that time the 19 wins were tied for the second most wins in the program's history.

Before taking over at Wayne State, Williams was the women's head coach at Sheridan College (Wyo.) for three seasons. While there he was named the Wyoming Conference Coach of the Year twice and was the Region IX Coach of the Year. In 1994 the team compiled a 33-14 record and was ranked 14th in the NJCAA national ranking. He took his team to a North Sub-Region championship and a Region IX championship appearance.

In 1993 he began his head coaching career at Sheridan when he served as the volleyball head coach and men's basketball assistant coach. In his time as the head coach of the volleyball program he put together a 117-66 record. In 1995 Sheridan went 42-8, won the Region IX title and finished fifth at the junior college national tournament. Williams garnered Wyoming Conference and Region IX Coach of the Year honors in 1994 and 1995.

Sheridan is also where Williams began his collegiate playing career. He played two seasons at Sheridan, where he was an All-Region IX player as a sophomore. In addition he was a two-time All-Wyoming Conference performer and a two-time academic all-conference selection. He then transferred to South Dakota where he earned All-NCC honors after leading the nation in free throw percentage at 91.2 percent. Williams was also named academic all-conference as a junior and senior. As a high school senior at Campbell County High School, he was named the first ever Mr. Basketball for the state of Wyoming in 1988.

Williams earned his associate's degree from Sheridan in 1990, his bachelor's degree from South Dakota in 1992 and his master's degree from South Dakota in 1997.

Ryun and his wife, Lyndy, are the parents of Natalie, age 10, and Emily, age 7.