

Sports

Chris Holtmann ready to begin new era for GWU

by Blake DuDonis
Pilot Editor-in-Chief

After nearly two months of searching, Gardner-Webb has named Chris Holtmann as the new men's basketball coach, making him the first new coach at the school in 15 years.

Holtmann is very familiar with Gardner-Webb as he spent 2003-2008 as an assistant for the school under former head coach Rick Scruggs. The last two seasons, however, he has spent at Ohio University, who recently upset three-seed Georgetown University in the first round of NCAA tournament this past season.

"Chris exemplifies the leadership qualities, along with the spiritual maturity to guide this basketball program to the upper echelon of the Big South Conference," said Vice President for Athletics Chuck Burch. "We are pleased to appoint him as the driving force behind a bright, new era in Gardner-Webb basketball."

During his previous time at Gardner-Webb, Holtmann was responsible for the recruiting of 2008 All-American Thomas Sanders, 2009 ESPN the Magazine Academic All-American Aaron Linn and 2008 Atlantic Sun Conference Freshman of the Year Nate Blank.

Holtmann was also a big part in getting the Bulldogs to the A-Sun championship game in 2005, a trend that he wants to get going again.

"Winning is my style of play," said Holtmann. "We are going to find a way that our guys are going to compete every night... Is the program where it needs to be right now? No. But I think we can work everyday to move it in the right direction and over time, it will get back to that point."

Aware that his hiring comes a little late into the off-season, Holtmann is meeting each member of the team individually in an effort to get to know them as they move into the summer.

Holtmann has also already spoken to Gardner-Webb signees for the upcoming year and has insured that several of them will still be playing for the Dawgs.

"It is important, obviously, to keep this team intact," said Holtmann. "If there is someone that is intent on leaving, we can visit that but I'll be honest with you, I've had a great feeling over the past couple days... I've had to talk to some of the signees and they are in with both feet now."

For anyone concerned that Holtmann, 38, is a bit young for a head-coaching job their worries should be put to rest as the Nicholasville, Ky comes with great recommendations.

"Chris is a great person and coach," said Butler Head Coach Brad Stevens. "His experience, both in coaching and at Gardner-Webb, will help the program flourish under his direction."

Besides Stevens, who's Butler Bulldogs came within inches of upsetting Duke for the NCAA championship this past season, NAIA Hall of Famer Paul Patterson also spoke Holtmann's praises.

"I am excited for both Chris Holtmann and Gardner-Webb University," said Patterson, Holtmann's former coach at Taylor University. "Chris is a bright, energetic, tireless worker who has been a high achiever his entire career. I would expect to see the same from him in his leadership at Gardner-Webb. His teams will be hard working, well prepared, and hard to play against every night. This is a good day for Gardner-Webb University."

The past two seasons, the Ohio Bobcats lead the MAC conference in points per game, scoring nearly 80 points a contest. While Holtmann looks to instill a fast paced offense into the Bulldogs system, his first focus will be defense.

"I feel like I have a good base for teaching a defensive system," said Holtmann. "I'm committed to that and I believe that can allow you to win games on a consistent basis... Offensively I want our guys to play with some freedom and aggressiveness... I'm excited (about the high-paced offense) but I have had some success coaching some really good defensive teams and there is no question that's going to be an emphasis that our guys will feel from day one."

GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA

Patricia C. Spurr, Music Director

**MONDAY, MAY 3, 2010
8:00 PM**

KATHILEEN DOVER THEATRE

Free and open to the public-Good-will offering taken to benefit GWU Fine Arts

ANDERSON *Belle of the Ball*

Patricia Harrelson, Soprano, GWU Professor

Terry Fern, Bass-Baritone, GWU Professor

BRAHMS *Concerto for Violin and Cello, Op. 102*

Colin Lupanu, Violin, GWU Professor and Concertmaster, Charlotte Symphony Orchestra

Daniel Laufer, Associate Principal Cello, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

WILLIAMS *Olympic Fanfare*

MARQUEZ *Danzon #2*

Khachaturian *Sabre Dance*

WEBER *Concerto #2 in Eb for Clarinet and Orchestra*

Chelsea Coleman (GWU'12), Clarinet

KUNNEKE *Dance Suite for Jazz Band and Orchestra, Intermezzo*