

JMU Nation

BASKETBALL COACHES

BY KEVIN WARNER ('02)

Rowe returns to his alma mater

Former JMU player isn't taking his new head-coaching responsibilities lightly

For Louis Rowe ('06), the fact that his first head-coaching job will unfold at his alma mater makes for a special homecoming.

Rowe's JMU journey began when he decided to transfer from the University of Florida and his home state to JMU in 1993. From there, he won a CAA championship under Lefty Driesell, received his undergraduate degree, returned to start a coaching career as an assistant, earned his graduate degree and set himself up for other coaching opportunities before ultimately returning to Madison as the 10th head coach in program history.

The son of educators, Rowe naturally connected with teaching the game of basketball after his own playing career ended. His re-



ference for the game and for the title of coach ensures that he never takes a day for granted. "When you're a coach, there are responsibilities, and I don't take them lightly. I go to bed at night and wake up in the morning thinking about those responsibilities."

With an energetic and committed staff and one of the most experienced rosters in the country with seven seniors returning, Rowe would appear to be well equipped to be successful from day one. However, to him, success won't necessarily

be measured in wins and losses. "My goal is to fill this program with guys that JMU fans can come and watch and say, 'Man, I like those guys. I see what they're doing and that they work hard.' That leads to the long-term goal everyone wants, to win games."

O'Regan poised to take the reins

Sean O'Regan ('03) spent nine seasons as an assistant coach of the women's basketball program at Madison under his mentor, Kenny Brooks. He credits Brooks for nearly every step in his career development, beginning with his time as a manager of the men's team when Brooks was an assistant coach.

But the reality is that O'Regan has been an integral part of the success that JMU women's basketball has enjoyed over the past decade. The program has recorded at least 24 wins in 11 consecutive seasons and five CAA titles in the last seven years. That success was a key factor in his hire as head coach.

"When I first met with the team, it was surreal

that I'm going to get to do this because it's been a dream of mine for so long," he says.

The changing of the guard includes a mostly new coaching staff, so the responsibility falls squarely on O'Regan's shoulders to connect the old and the new and to help his student-athletes adjust. "I've learned that I need to be extremely good with communication. I know the way I want to keep it going."

O'Regan believes the transition will be made easier by the support and resources in place at JMU. "I think that James Madison operates like a big-time program," he says. "In sports medicine, strength and conditioning, academics, the campus—we have every resource we need. As we add cost of attendance and a new Convocation Center, I don't think I could come up with anything that is going to hold us back."



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