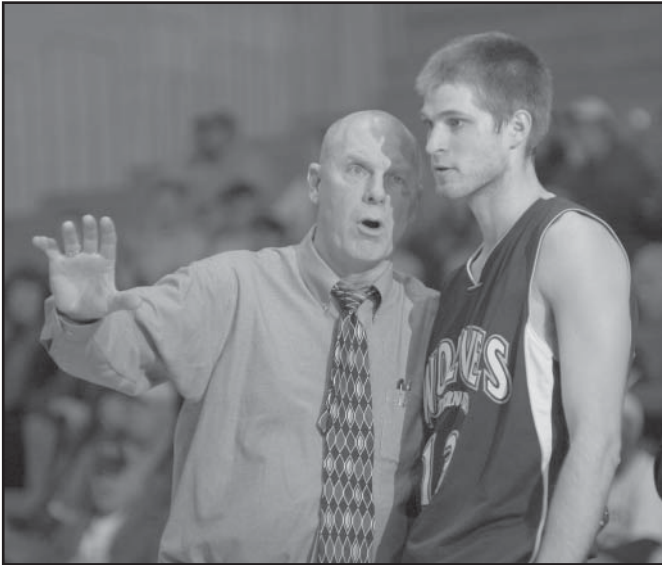


MEYER MOVES UP AS SECOND WINNINGEST NCAA COACH

Written by: Melissa Wolf



The top echelon of winning coaches in men's basketball has a new tenant, Northern State University head coach, Don Meyer. Meyer became the second winningest coach in all divisions of NCAA men's basketball, surpassing Adolph Rupp and Dean Smith this season. He continues to chase Bobby Knight, who became the first men's basketball coach in NCAA history to win 900+ games.

Don Meyer moved into second place on the NCAA all-time wins list on January 19, 2008 with his 879th career win. His 880th win came on Saturday, January 26 and gave him sole ownership of the position. In his 46th season as a head coach, Meyer has served at the helm of three programs and is currently in his ninth year at Northern State, a NCAA Division II institution located in Aberdeen, S.D. He spent 24 years at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn. and kicked off his career with three seasons at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minn.

"As Coach Meyer moves into second place for all-time wins, I would like to express my genuine respect and admiration for him and what he stands for. Coach Meyer has achieved these wins while building up three different programs at three different institutions. Throughout his 36 year career, all but one of his student athletes received a college degree. Congratulations Coach Meyer."

- Pat Summitt, Tennessee Lady Vols

To get a glimpse of what Don Meyer is made of, all you have to do is ask him about the records he has broken in his decades of coaching. Having heard the subject come up time after time, I can guarantee that you will get one of two answers. His typically humble response of "Well, when you're as old as I am and have been coaching this long, you're bound to win a game or two," is given with a smirk and a chuckle. Meyer's second most common response is

more reflective of his serious side, saying that the attention he's received this season for joining the ranks of Knight, Smith and Rupp allows him to reflect on all of the great assistants, staff members, administrators and players that he's had the opportunity to work with over the years.

Meyer is not a man who particularly cares for records, whether they might be reflective of himself or of his teams. His evasive responses to media questions have surely caused a headache or two, but underscore what is important to Meyer. His thoughts do not center on the success of one, or even the record of his team. He is a man that worries about the process, not the product, and instinctively highlights the success or failure of the team, not the individual.

Meyer's relationships with his coaching staff and players go beyond the hard court and into the personal realm. With the hours he and his staff put into the job, they are more than co-workers and represent a true family, complete with disagreements and debates and a good deal of humor and laughter. Meyer makes it clear that their jobs are to develop the spiritual nature of the players, rather than a playing nature, to bring out the best in every athlete. Academic expectations are high; there has only been a single athlete coached by Meyer who has not completed his college degree.

"To understand why Coach Meyer is successful is to watch his team take on his dynamic personality. His teams are fiercely competitive, undaunted by any task, full of love, disciplined, unselfish, detail-oriented, and mentally and physically tough. But most of all, a Coach Meyer-taught team understands that they are all working toward something that is greater than any one individual."

- Sundance Wicks, former NSU player, assistant at Northern Illinois

A native of Wayne, Neb., Meyer had aspirations as a youngster of one day becoming a major league baseball player. In addition to his slugging skills, a young Don also excelled in the game that would become his life – basketball. Meyer attended the University of Northern Colorado, graduating in 1967 after playing four years of both baseball and basketball. On the diamond, Meyer was a standout player from the mound, logging a career record of 22-2. He jokes that despite his record, he couldn't break a pane of glass and that, because he was balding at the time, scouts thought he was a 39-year-old senior. On the hard court, he led UNC to the 1966 NCAA college division playoffs and was named an All-American. In the end, Meyer discovered that his love was for basketball and coaching and was where his career would start.

After several assistant coaching stints, Meyer landed his first head position in 1972 at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minn. In the six seasons prior to Meyer's arrival, the Pipers had an overall record of 30-177. After a 5-20

record in his first season, Meyer turned things around, recording records of 16-10 and 16-11 in the next two seasons. Hamline reached the NCAA DIII Elite Eight in Meyer's last year with the institution. From there, he made the move to Lipscomb University, where he posted an unprecedented number of wins faster than anyone thought possible.

Meyer spent 24 years coaching the Bisons at NAIA Division I David Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn. His Lipscomb teams spent a decade winning more games than any other team in the country, averaging 32 wins per season for ten years before his move to Northern. Meyer's Bisons teams made 13 National Tournament appearances, winning the NAIA National Championship in 1986. Meyer was named NAIA National Coach of the Year in 1989 and 1990, and was selected to the NAIA Hall of Fame at the age of 47.

Meyer spent his Lipscomb years morphing himself and his style of coaching into one that earned respect and demanded the best out of his players. Using a motion offense similar to Northern's, Meyer's teams led the nation in scoring in 1989, 1990, 1992, 1993 and 1995, averaging more than 100 points per game in each of those seasons. In his 24 years at DLU, Meyer logged a record of 665-181, reaching his 700th win in the final days of his stint with the Bisons. He coached an array of great players, including college basketball's first and second all-time leading scorers, John Pierce (4,230) and Philip Hutcheson (4,106), whose career scoring marks have yet to be topped.

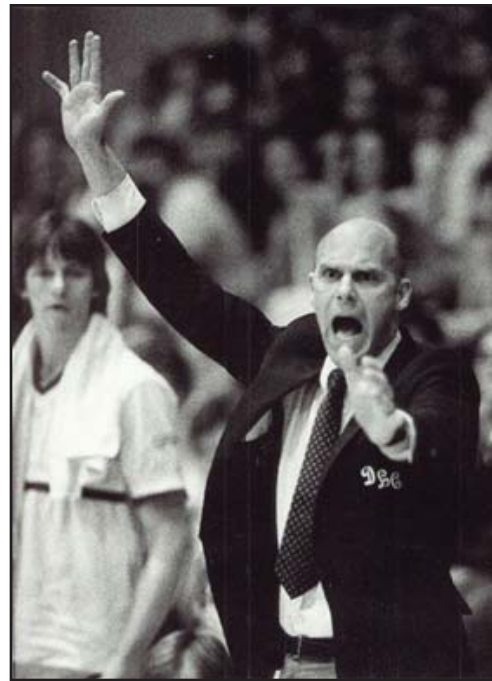


Photo courtesy of Lipscomb University
 greatness. His athletes are expected, first and foremost, to play as a team and to put the concern for the cause ahead of the concern for themselves. Recruits are hand picked to fit the mold of the program, with coaches searching not necessarily for the best players, but for the right players. "We know we can't coach every kid, not every athlete is right for us. The ones who end up here know what they're getting into," says Meyer.

And what Meyer's athletes are getting into is a tradition of intensity and hard work. Meyer's squads play a fast-paced game, something that is not common in much of the Midwest, but that Northern State attempts to create. The main focus of Meyer's style of basketball is defense. The Wolves bind opponents with frustrating and active man-to-man pressure and place a high emphasis on nabbing defensive boards. Offensively, Meyer runs a motion offense highlighted by consistency in shooting. His teams look for the best possible shot selection and have pride in rebounding any misses. There is a depth to his teams that allows players to go as hard as possible for short periods of time. The sidelines on game night are worn thin with a constant stream of players entering and exiting the game.

"A quote of Coach's that I still use every week with my high school guys is: 'You can only control two things: ATTITUDE AND EFFORT.' You can't argue against the fact that Coach has maintained a very high level of effort and a winning attitude since I have known him, and this always transfers to his teams. I am proud to say that I played for him."

- John Pierce, former Lipscomb player (1990-94), college basketball's all-time leading scorer

Meyer made the move back to the NCAA ranks in 1999, accepting his current position at Northern State University. He transitioned the Wolves to his style of play, and the results illustrate a path to consistent success. Under Meyer, Northern has had seven seasons with 20 or more wins and he has brought the Wolves to four Northern Sun Conference regular season or tournament championships, as well as three NCAA Tournament appearances (prior to 2007-08 season).

Not only have NSU's athletes bought into the program, but the entire city of Aberdeen, long known as a basketball town, has also backed Meyer and his team. With a hometown population of just 24,000, the Wolves have not ranked lower than eighth in the nation for attendance average throughout Meyer's campaign. They topped all NCAA Division II institutions for attendance in 2005-06 and have recorded numbers in the top four in the nation since 2004-05.

For Meyer, leading his teams and players to success does not mean striving for wins, it means striving for

"Coach Meyer is one of the hardest working people I've ever been around. Not only does he have a great work ethic, but he always strives to do the best he can. I believe these two characteristics have rubbed off on every team he's coached, and that's a big reason why his teams have been so successful, year in and year out. Coach never stressed to us that the most important thing was winning games, but instead to try to get better in every game we played. Congratulations Coach."

- Matt Hammer, former Northern State player

Meyer and his staff and players live a very self-contained life during the season. Week days are spent preparing for upcoming opponents and weekends are filled with games and other responsibilities. The Northern State men's team runs a program called Jr. McWolves, working on

**NCAA ALL-TIME MBB CAREER WINS
(GAMES THRU 1/27/08)**

Name	Yrs.	Wins
1. *Bobby Knight	41	901
2. *Don Meyer	36	880
3. Dean Smith	36	879
4. Adolph Rupp	41	876
5. *Herb Magee	41	843

* Denotes active coaching status

**MEYER BREAKDOWN BY INSTITUTION
(GAMES THRU 1/26/08)**

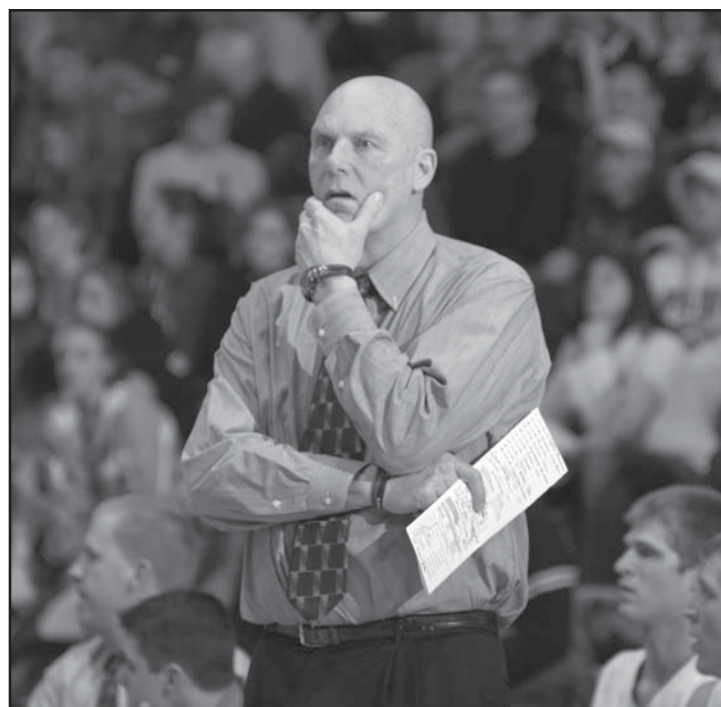
Years	Institution	Record
1972-75 (3)	Hamline Univ. (Minn.)	37-41
1975-99 (24)	Lipscomb Univ. (Tenn.)	665-179
1999-present (9)	Northern Univ. (S.D.)	178-77
36 seasons		880-297

Meyer began attending top-level coaching academies early in his career and appreciated the lessons that were passed from coach to coach. After attending Bobby Knight's academy, Meyer decided to start his own summer sessions to help spread ideas of the game. In 17 years, well over 10,000 coaches from all over the nation have attended the Don Meyer Coaching Academy. Meyer's featured speakers read as a who's who in the coaching ranks, starring such keynote presenters as Pat Summitt, John Wooden, Rick Majerus, and Tubby Smith. Meyer's Academy not only teaches other coaches from all ranks of the sport about the game, it gives him and his staff opportunities to learn from those attending and to develop new ideas in preparation for the event. In addition to the Coaching Academy, Meyer also produces instructional books and a 30-tape series called "Building a Championship Program." The vhs or dvd sets have helped coaches at every level from high school to the NBA. Programs that have used the tapes include perennial Division I powerhouses Duke, Kansas, Wake Forest and North Carolina, and NBA franchises like the Utah Jazz and Seattle Supersonics.

basketball skills with area youth on some home weekends. Throughout the year, the squad volunteers at other various events in the community. They work the NSU concession stand to raise money for scholarships and also participate in the NSU Day of Champions, in which the NSU athletic department devotes a day to working for the community. And since Meyer's team is so well-followed and easily recognized, there tends to be a high demand for appearances throughout the year. "It's always great to be in a community that appreciates basketball, and you can't find that any more than you find it at NSU," says Meyer. "We are happy to give back when we can. Plus," he grins, "the busier the kids are, the less trouble they get into."

With the hectic pace of the school year and working 16-hour days during the summer camp season, having ways of releasing pressure is a necessity. Meyer tries to surround himself with people who make him laugh. His spiritual background also helps to keep more of a balanced life. Don's wife of 40 years, Carmen, plays an incredible role in his life. Understanding of the responsibilities of his job, Carmen carried the brunt of the workload in raising their three children. "I would like to say that you can balance your life and coaching," says Meyer, "but it seems that the most successful coaches are a little unbalanced."

Meyer's coaching methods are often described as eclectic and pragmatic. He borrows plays, press breaks, coaching ideas and off-court strategies from coaches around the nation and uses what works. He is skilled at breaking down fundamentals and presenting them to his athletes in a logical and organized progression. A perpetual student of the game, Meyer gains insight from hundreds of other coaches and works ideas into his theory of coaching. He watches how others interact with players, how they use words, pictures and other tools to drill home ideas.



"It is amazing what Don has accomplished in his career. The fact that he is becoming the second winningest coach in college basketball puts him in an elite class of people. His name will be mentioned with some of the most elite coaches that have ever been involved with not just basketball, but sports in general. I join other coaches across the country by using his innovative ways of teaching the game of basketball. Congratulations Coach Meyer."

- Tubby Smith, University of Minnesota