



It's official: Gamble, UIS bid farewell

Lanphier graduate heads to Division I Providence

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The University of Illinois Springfield and Kevin Gamble made official Gamble's resignation as head basketball coach on Monday.

Gamble will be taking over a position with NCAA Division I Providence College in Providence, R.I., as the director of player development and video operations. Gamble, who was a member of Lanphier's 1983 Class AA state championship basketball team and had an 11-year career in the NBA, was the first basketball coach in the fledgling UIS program.

"We thank Kevin for all he has done for UIS and the Springfield community," UIS Director of Athletics Dr. Rodger Jehlicka said in a statement. "We want our coaches to achieve their goals both personally and professionally and coaching at the Division I level has always been one of Kevin's dreams. We wish Kevin nothing but success and his family the best as they move east."

Gamble was 130-79 as the Prairie Stars' head coach and oversaw the program's development from NAIA to NCAA Division II.

"I was excited to be able to start your own program," Gamble said. "I didn't have any coaching experience, and that was a little nerve-racking at first. But I was able to work for a couple guys who were able to help me along the way, Rodger Jehlicka and (former A.D.) Nick Adams. They helped me out a lot. I thank those guys for giving me the opportunity. To bring in someone with no experience to start a program was a gutsy move on their part, and I think it worked out fine."

He had been gauging interest for a while. He'll be working for Keno Davis at Providence. Davis' father, Tom, was Gamble's coach at Iowa. The job just developed from there.

"I had been looking for the past couple years," Gamble said. "I built this program up to respectability, and I'm no spring chicken, either. I'll be working on 45 in November, so thought I'd put my name out there and see what happens."

Since he's not a coach, Gamble won't be able to provide on-the-floor instruction. But the idea is to help Providence's basketball players in other ways.

"Player development is being around the guys, and being somewhat of a role model," Gamble said. "I've been where they're at and want to go. A lot of guys play D-I, and everyone wants to play in the NBA. My job will be to help those guys. I can watch and evaluate and give guys ideas of what they have to do to make it to next level. I think my main job is what the title says, developing young men into men, whether it's graduating college or getting to the next level in the NBA."

The search to find Gamble's replacement will begin immediately.

"We're hoping to get somebody in place hopefully in early August at the latest," UIS assistant athletic director Scott Reed said. "That's the best-case scenario. But definitely before school starts. It's a bittersweet day. We all love Kevin as person and coach, and we're losing someone we all enjoyed being around. Our goal is to find a coach to elevate us up in the Division II ladder and keep the connection in the campus community."

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