

10-2-2014

Central Washington University Basketball Coaching Staff, Dean Nicholson

Central Washington University Athletics

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/cwu_basketball

Recommended Citation

Central Washington University Athletics, "Central Washington University Basketball Coaching Staff, Dean Nicholson" (2014).
Basketball. Book 107.
http://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/cwu_basketball/107

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Sports Statistics and Histories at ScholarWorks@CWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Basketball by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@CWU.

Dean Nicholson

One of the greatest basketball coaches in college basketball history at any level.

That is the best way to describe Dean Nicholson, who was Central Washington University's head basketball coach for 26 seasons before retiring following the 1989-90 campaign.

Nicholson, who won 889 games in a career that spanned five decades, completed his career at Yakima Valley College during the 1997-98 season, guiding the Indians to a 22-11 record. In three seasons at YVC, he won 72 games and lost 24, including a 26-5 record in 1996-97 when he led Yakima to a third-place finish in the NWAACC state tournament.

Prior to taking over at YVC, Nicholson had been retired since completing a two-year stint (1991-92) with the Yakima SunKings of the CBA.

In his final season at Central in 1990, Nicholson became only the 17th coach in the entire history of intercollegiate basketball to win 600 games.

He also qualified his team for the NAIA national tournament in Kansas City for a record 22nd time and he became the winningest coach in the history of the national tournament with 38 victories.

Nicholson is a member of three Hall-of-Fames - the Washington State Basketball Coaches Association Hall-of-Fame, the CWU Hall-of-Fame and NAIA Hall-of-Fame.

Only twice in 26 years at CWU did he fail to win at least 20 games. Six times he guided teams into the NAIA Final Four, placing second in 1970, third in 1967, 1969, 1987 and 1989 and fourth in 1985.

His 1970 squad won 31 games, including a school-record 25 straight, and he was voted NAIA Coach-of-the-Year. In 1987, the 'Cats posted a school-record 32 wins and Dean was selected Northwest Small-College Coach-of-the-Year for the second time in his career. His 1989 team equaled that school record with 32 victories. He also won the Northwest Coach-of-the-Year award following the 1990 season.

On seven different occasions he was voted NAIA District 1 Coach-of-the-Year. In 1987, he was voted as one of the five coaches on the NAIA's 50th anniversary all-time team.

Nicholson received numerous other honors during his illustrious coaching career. In 1970 he coached at the USA - Pan American Developmental Camp. He was the NAIA representative to the U.S. Olympic Basketball Committee and coached at the Olympic camp and trials in 1971 and 1972.

He was the head coach for AAU teams which toured South America in 1972 and 1973 and for the NAIA All-Star team in the Cup of Nations tournament in Colombia in 1974.

He was an assistant coach for the West team in the 1982 National Sports Festival in Indianapolis, Ind., and served as a member of the NABC's Hall-of-Fame committee. A charter member of the CWU Hall-of-Fame, he was inducted into the NAIA Hall-of-Fame in 1986, joining his father in that institution.

Nicholson and his father Leo are the winningest father-son coaching combination in the history of collegiate basketball with 1,114 victories at the four-year level. Leo won 505 games from the fall of 1929 before retiring in 1964.

Nicholson also enjoyed a great playing career at CWU. He earned all-conference honors four straight seasons in basketball, leading the Wildcats to a conference title in 1947 and their first NAIA national tournament berth in 1950.

He scored 1,377 points which still ranks ninth on the school's all-time list. In 1950, he made 83 percent of his free throws.

Nicholson also lettered in tennis and baseball. He led the Evergreen Conference in hitting in 1950. Off the field, he was elected president of the student body.

After earning a bachelor of arts degree in 1950, he taught mathematics and served as the head basketball coach at Puyallup High School for 14 seasons, winning five Puget Sound titles and compiling a record of 192-113.

In the fall of 1964 he returned to Ellensburg after being named to succeed his father as head basketball coach. In addition to coaching basketball, he was the school's baseball coach in 1967 and tennis coach in 1965 and 1966 and from 1968 until 1978.

Nicholson earned his masters degree from CWU in 1957. He also attended the University of Washington, Oregon State University, Seattle Pacific University and Western Washington University. In 1983 he was honored with CWU's Distinguished Teacher award.

Nicholson was born June 28, 1926 in Seattle. He graduated from Ellensburg High School in 1944 where he earned all-state honors in basketball and was a Yakima Valley tennis champion.

He and his wife, Charlene, who now reside in Concord, Calif., were married June 18, 1948. They have two grown sons, Joel and Gary.

Nicholson's Coaching Record

| Year | W | Overall | | | | W | L | Conference | |
|------|----|---------|------|------|--------|---|-------|------------|--|
| | | L | PF | PA | Finish | | | Home | |
| 1951 | 12 | 7 | | | | | | | |
| 1952 | 15 | 6 | | | | | | | |
| 1953 | 16 | 6 | | | | | | | |
| 1954 | 16 | 10 | | | | | | | |
| 1955 | 20 | 6 | | | | | | | |
| 1956 | 23 | 4 | | | | | | | |
| 1957 | 6 | 14 | | | | | | | |
| 1958 | 9 | 15 | | | | | | | |
| 1959 | 14 | 6 | | | | | | | |
| 1960 | 7 | 11 | | | | | | | |
| 1961 | 16 | 4 | | | | | | | |
| 1962 | 18 | 5 | | | | | | | |
| 1963 | 11 | 7 | | | | | | | |
| 1964 | 7 | 12 | | | | | | | |
| 1965 | 20 | 6 | 2108 | 1863 | 9 | 1 | 1st | 12-3 | |
| 1966 | 21 | 8 | 2260 | 2026 | 9 | 3 | 2nd | 7-2 | |
| 1967 | 27 | 4 | 2552 | 2107 | 8 | 1 | 1st | 11-0 | |
| 1968 | 22 | 8 | 2380 | 2046 | 10 | 2 | 1st | 11-3 | |
| 1969 | 24 | 9 | 2500 | 2206 | 8 | 4 | 1st | 11-2 | |
| 1970 | 31 | 2 | 2432 | 2141 | 12 | 0 | 1st | 10-0 | |
| 1971 | 24 | 9 | 2569 | 2243 | 11 | 3 | 1st-T | 12-1 | |
| 1972 | 17 | 9 | 2121 | 1978 | 9 | 3 | 2nd-T | 10-1 | |
| 1973 | 20 | 9 | 1842 | 1711 | 11 | 1 | 1st | 12-1 | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----|-----|------|----------|-----|-----|-------|------|
| 1974 | 17 | 10 | 2095 | 2031 | 8 | 4 | 1st-T | 12-0 |
| 1975 | 23 | 6 | 2284 | 1944 | 10 | 2 | 1st | 12-1 |
| 1976 | 23 | 7 | 2235 | 2019 | 9 | 3 | 2nd | 9-3 |
| 1977 | 24 | 8 | 2325 | 2097 | 11 | 1 | 1st-T | 14-1 |
| 1978 | 21 | 8 | 2219 | 1966 | 9 | 3 | 1st-T | 15-0 |
| 1979 | 25 | 6 | 2399 | 2027 | | | | 11-1 |
| 1980 | 27 | 6 | 2520 | 2169 | 6 | 2 | 1st-T | 12-2 |
| 1981 | 21 | 12 | 2280 | 2155 | | | | 11-4 |
| 1982 | 22 | 7 | 2133 | 1909 | | | | 12-0 |
| 1983 | 7 | 23 | 2395 | 2007 | | | | 4-9 |
| 1984 | 23 | 10 | 2446 | 2210 | 3 | 1 | 1st | 9-2 |
| 1985 | 25 | 11 | 2736 | 2491 | 5 | 1 | 1st | 12-1 |
| 1986 | 27 | 6 | 2530 | 2319 | 4 | 0 | 1st | 12-1 |
| 1987 | 32 | 9 | 3330 | 2861 | | | | 13-2 |
| 1988 | 23 | 11 | 2909 | 2467 | | | | 13-1 |
| 1989 | 32 | 10 | 3378 | 2847 | | | | 12-3 |
| 1990 | 31 | 5 | 2949 | 2429 | | | | 12-1 |
| 1991 | 15 | 41 | | | | | | |
| 1992 | 1 | 7 | | | | | | |
| 1996 | 24 | 8 | | | | | | |
| 1997 | 26 | 5 | | | | | | |
| 1998 | 22 | 11 | | | | | | |
| Totals | | 609 | 219 | .736 | CWU | 291 | 45 | |
| | 192 | 113 | .630 | Puyallup | | | | |
| | 72 | 24 | .750 | YVC | | | | |
| | 16 | 48 | .250 | SunKings | | | | |
| | 889 | 404 | .688 | Total | | | | |

Note: CWU posted record of 26-4 in 1983 before forfeiting 19 games.