



# Kari Pickens named women’s head coach

NOAH CLOONAN  
@noahcloonan

The Ashland University women’s basketball team has named Kari Pickens as the new head coach.

Pickens becomes the 13th head coach at Ashland and will replace Robyn Fralick who has accepted the head coaching job at Bowling Green State University after going 104-3 in her three seasons as a head coach.

Pickens spent last season as the associate head coach and has been an assistant to both Fralick and Sue Ramsey over the past five seasons.

Her coaching career comes after one of the most illustrious playing careers in Division II history, as she dominated in two years for Ashland after transferring from the University of Dayton in 2011.

Despite two successful seasons at Dayton, Pickens said that she felt God calling her to come to Ashland University to play basketball and she answered that call.

Pickens helped to lead Ashland to the programs first National Championship game in 2012 and helped them to win it in 2013.

In her two years at Ashland Pickens scored 1,414 points and grabbed 903 rebounds and was named the WBCA Division II player of the year in both seasons.

“I would be remiss not to just thank God, honestly, for this opportunity, He brought me to Ashland,” Pickens said. “I’ve gone through so much transformation in my time here. I hope that in my time as head coach, I can continue to see that transformation.”

That is not the only award that the Women’s Basketball Coaches

Association has awarded Pickens with as she was named the Assistant Coach of the year in 2016-17 following the Eagles undefeated season.

She was a part of WBCA’s inaugural class of the Thirty Under 30 award that according to their website was “created to recognize 30 up-and-coming women’s basketball coaches age 30 and under at all levels of the game.”

“Kari Pickens has been successful at every stage of her basketball career. She grew up around the game, thrived at every level as a player and is now one of the best young coaches in the game. She’s a phenomenal teacher, a relentless recruiter and a tireless student of the game,” Athletic Director Al King said. “As a player, Kari could play any position on the floor. She shows the same versatility as a coach. She’s well versed in every facet of the profession.”

Pickens will have a tough act to follow as she will take over for Fralick, who has the best winning percentage of any coach at any level of any sport with at least 100 career games coach as she lost just three games over three seasons.

“Robyn is a wonderful human being, and I’m going to miss seeing her every day a lot. I feel very confident moving forward that Robyn has taught me as much as I can know going into the head coaching position,” Pickens said. “I want to thank Robyn for everything she’s poured into my life, and into the lives of these girls.”

Staying in house with the coaching change has been something that Ashland women’s basketball has been familiar with.



AU ATHLETICS

Pickens was named as the 13th head coach after coach Fralick accepted a position with Bowling Green State University.

Fralick took over the head coaching job from Sue Ramsey in 2015 after Ramsey had coached for 20 years and led AU to a national title.

Fralick was an assistant coach during the title run and now Pickens finds herself in a very similar situation. Pickens has a national championship as both a player and an assistant coach and now will have a chance to chase another ring as the head coach at Ashland.

Pickens was heavily involved with recruiting during her time as assistant coach and said she is very excited about the recruiting class

of four that is coming to Ashland in the fall. Aside from the exciting class, Ashland will return three starters including the Division II player of the Year, Jodi Johnson.

Renee Stimpert, Maddie Dackin, Brooke Smith, Sara Loomis, Sara Hart, Karlee Pieru and Maddie Blyer are the returners for the Eagles next year.

Ashland has made back-to-back trips to the national championship game winning the programs second title back in 2017.

Looking ahead, Pickens is currently searching for the rest of her

coaching staff and hopes to have her staff completely in place by the end of April so that the team can get familiar before leaving for the summer.

For a team that is coming off of one of the most dominating stretches in college basketball history the bar is high for Coach Pickens, but she said she is not going to do things much differently than Fralick.

“I told [the team] in the team room, It’s going to be the same culture but just with a little bit of Swaggy P flavor,” Pickens said.

# Schaly reaches career milestone

## Becomes seventh coach in D-II history to win 1,100



AU ATHLETICS

Schaly earned his 1,100 win on March 31st in a 10-9 win over Wayne State.

STEVE SHRENKEL  
@AUCollegian

Ashland University baseball coach John Schaly has known nothing but success throughout his time as a collegiate head coach.

He is not only a baseball lifer but also quite simply put, a winner.

On March 31 at Wayne State University, Schaly won his 1,100 game of his career.

He became just the seventh coach in NCAA Division II history to do so. His current record sits at 1,107-613-7. This is his 31st year as a col-

lege baseball coach.

Schaly is currently amid his 21st year in AU’s dugout.

He holds a record of 745-395-4 with the Eagles.

“You figure when you’ve been around as long as I have, you’re going to get there (1,100) eventually,” Schaly said.

When he reached 1,100 wins after the Eagles series with the Warriors, at first no one had really realized it, including Schaly himself.

“Honestly when this happened, I don’t think any of us knew it,” Schaly said. “Nobody talked about

it up at Wayne. None of our players our assistant coaches knew it. We were just getting ready for the next game and then just kind of figured it all out.”

For Schaly, achieving the career milestone reminds him of just how long he has been coaching and the players that have come through his life.

“It means that I’ve been around a long time,” Schaly said. “I’m able to reflect back on all the talented great players that we’ve had but more importantly how hard they worked and bought into our sys-

tem.”

Besides remembering the players throughout his time as a baseball coach, Schaly also is reminded of the assistant coaches and the part that they have played in helping him achieve such great success.

“Along with players is also just a lot of great assistant coaches,” Schaly said. “This is something where you need a lot of help. One guy can’t do it. I’ve been lucky and blessed to have some really, really good assistant coaches.”

Schaly got his first collegiate head coaching start at Berry (Ga.) where he started the program. During his four years there, he had a record of 155-91.

After Berry, he had moved on to coach at St. Leo for six years. While there, his teams had achieved two seasons in which they had won 40 or more games.

This all culminated with him landing in Ashland University for his next coaching gig in 1998.

While at Ashland, Schaly has experienced nothing but success.

He has lead the Eagles to the NCAA postseason 14 times.

They have also won four regional championships and reached the NCAA Division II College World Series four times.

This past year, Schaly also had the distinct honor to be inducted into the American Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame alongside his late father, Don.

They are the second father-son duo to do so.

Don Schaly coached at Marietta college for 40 seasons, earning 1,442 wins in the process, showing that baseball runs deep within the blood of the Schaly family.

“A lot of what I do, I got from my father,” Schaly said. “That winning approach and process I kind of just grew up with. 80 to 90 percent of what I do, I got from my dad.”

One of the ways that Schaly has

employed his father’s teachings at AU involved letting the veteran players on a team mentor the younger ones.

“My father said that sometimes a program runs itself because of the older players,” Schaly said. “Our older players and veterans teach the younger guys how we do things and treat each day.”

The relationship between his father and himself has been nothing short of special.

When he hit 1,100, the moment only could have been made sweeter if he could have shared it with his father.

“It’s a great feeling to reach that many wins,” Schaly said. “I just wish he was here to see it himself. Anytime the two of us can be talked about in the same sentence, it means a lot to me. He’s the reason I’m doing what I’m doing now.”

Currently, the Eagles have come off an impressive six game winning streak with a series sweep against the Saginaw Valley State Cardinals.

They have also won the last nine out of 10 games.

The ballclub has made this season very enjoyable to coach, he said.

“We’ve got great senior leadership on the team this year,” Schaly said. “This is a fun group to work with. I really enjoy coming to work everyday and being around these guys.”

Even though Schaly has yet another accomplishment to add to his belt, he isn’t planning to stop coaching any time soon.

“I’ve got a long way to go yet,” Schaly said. “I’m going to be coaching for many years to come. I enjoy what I’m doing and ultimately, I will keep doing it as long as I keep enjoying every day.”

Schaly and the rest of the team are to play again April 13th against Grand Valley State with first pitch at 1 p.m.