

Jake Diebler At Home As New Ohio State Men's Basketball Assistant Coach

Jon Diebler stood at a back wall for the introductory press conference for the new men's basketball assistant coach at Value City Arena on Thursday.

It was a rare occasion for the one-time Buckeye standout to be overshadowed by the man at the microphone — his older brother, Jake.

But for Jake Diebler it was a homecoming as well. He returned to the school where he was video coordinator for former coach Thad Matta from 2014-16 before spending the past three seasons as an assistant at Vanderbilt.

"Many of you can imagine how excited I am and how excited my family is to be back in Columbus and to be back at Ohio State," Jake Diebler said. "When you talk about home, especially for us, my wife (Jordyn) graduated from here. Obviously, I have a relative who was an OK player here as well."

That teasing jab was directed at his "little" brother in the back of the room. Jon Diebler played for the Buckeyes from 2008-11 and is the Big Ten's career leader in three-pointers made (374). He returned Tuesday from Turkey where he had been playing professionally.

"I'm happy for him," Jon Diebler said. "He deserves it. Jake's a guy who works extremely hard. He's a great coach, a great recruiter. To have him back, for me as a brother, is exciting. As a former player, I'm excited.

"My mom's excited. My dad's excited. It's good to have him back home."

Jake Diebler, who played basketball at Valparaiso, was named April 22 by head coach Chris Holtmann to replace Mike Schrage, who became head coach at Elon on April 5.

It was fortuitous timing for Diebler. When Commodores head coach Bryce Drew was fired after the 2018-19 season, Diebler was without a job as well.

"I was aggressively looking," he said. "I had some really good conversations with some potential opportunities before this position opened up, and I maintained that aggressive approach with this one too.

"To go through some of the adversity I went through this past season and this offseason I can tell you right now I'm a far better coach than I was 12 months ago or two years ago. That I know for sure."

Diebler said he didn't know Holtmann well before interviewing for the position but was following the program since Matta was fired in June 2017. The Buckeyes the past two seasons reached the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

There were two reasons why Diebler kept tabs on Holtmann from afar.

"You try to watch other people are doing and what makes them successful, and Coach Holtmann has an

unbelievable track record," Diebler said. "So I've always admired and watched what he's doing and pick up things you can use wherever you're at."

"And to be honest, we're Buckeye fans. I think that's the other piece of it. There's times I come home and my wife's got the Buckeyes on the Big Ten Network and shoot, football Saturdays, she's trying to plan her days around watching the Buckeyes. I couldn't get away from it."

The Dieblers grew up in northwest Ohio where their father, Keith, was a longtime high school coach who is coming out of a four-year retirement to coach at Danbury, Ohio, next season.

Now, Jake Diebler is back where he feels he was intended to be.

"This is home, and there's something to be said when you have an opportunity to return home and do what you love with the people that you love and around people that you love and are close with," he said. "I think it's special."

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