

Ohio State Promotes Kevin Burch To Men's Volleyball Head Coach

The Ohio State men's volleyball team needed a new head coach after Hall of Fame coach Pete Hanson retired.

Replacing one of the most successful coaches in the history of the sport after 35 years at the helm is a tall task, but Ohio State chose one of Hanson's top assistants in Kevin Burch.

The Ohio State Department of Athletics announced Burch as the ninth head coach in program history May 21.

"Kevin Burch has constructed a blueprint for the men's volleyball program built on the same pillars and goals utilized as the foundation to our strategic plan," Janine Oman, Deputy Director of Athletics and men's volleyball program administrator, said. "He has demonstrated a commitment to our eight stated values as an athletics & business advancement department - integrity, education, people, excellence, respect, innovation, community and tradition."

Burch, who has been a part of a remarkable seven national championship coaching staffs since 2011, expressed his excitement about the future of the men's volleyball program at Ohio State.

"Thank you to Gene Smith, Janine Oman and the entire Ohio State athletics leadership council for granting me the privilege of guiding our men's volleyball program," Burch said. "I'm honored and grateful to be presented this responsibility at an institution that is dear to my heart.

"The Ohio State University and this men's volleyball team are special. The staunch support of our athletics administration, the history of this program's success, and recent completion of the Covelli Center combine to make this truly the best program in the country."

Burch graduated from Ohio State in 2011 with a degree in sports and leisure studies. He served as a volunteer assistant coach on the Buckeyes' 2011 national title team.

He later returned to Columbus as an assistant coach and recruiting coordinator prior to the 2015-16 academic year, and the Scarlet and Gray proceeded to win back-to-back national championships in his first two campaigns as a full-time assistant in 2016 and 2017.



Graphic courtesy of Ohio State athletics.

In between his stints at Ohio State, Burch won four straight national titles, giving him seven in as many years. He served as an assistant coach at Springfield College and won D-III men's national championships there in 2012 and 2014.

As an assistant at UC Irvine in 2013, Burch won another D-I men's title, then in 2015 at Penn State, he

won a D-I women's title as Penn State's director of operations.

In his 14 years of coaching at the collegiate level, Burch has had the luxury of learning from some of the game's great coaches, including Hanson, Russ Rose of Penn State women's volleyball and Charlie Sullivan of Springfield men's volleyball. Burch's coaching mentors have combined to win 20 national titles and 12 national coach of the year honors.

"Guidance from exceptional mentors has been integral in my development as a leader," Burch said. "I would not be the coach, husband, son or man I am today without the influence of Coach Hanson. He has touched the lives of hundreds associated with OSU men's volleyball, and none more than mine. My gratitude for him is boundless. I look forward to continuing his tradition of molding the young men currently in the program and further connecting with our many great alumni.

"I'd also like to thank my wife, Kelly, for her unwavering support. She pushes me to be better every single day and has had my back every step of the way."

Although a native of California, Burch was inspired by his late grandfather, Darrell Burch, to make his way to Columbus. His grandfather is a three-time Ohio State graduate, with bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees from the university in 1951, '53 and '59.

Having earned the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) '30 under 30' Award in 2017, Burch is among the best in the field. In addition to his accolades, he has proven to be quite the recruiter, bringing in commitments from eight AVCA High School All-Americans, three USA U19 athletes and two senior national team players.

Beyond the volleyball court, Burch emphasizes the pursuit of excellence in academics, community service, alumni relations, development and more.

In his last four years on the staff, 62 men's volleyball players earned OSU Scholar-Athlete recognition. He also worked with the Ohio State development team to raise funds for the Hanson Legacy program endowment fund. Additionally, Burch developed an alumni job and internship database to assist in facilitating job placement for current student-athletes.

Prior to his coaching career, Burch led the 2008 Orange Coast College team to the state finals as a captain. He played libero as a freshman before making the transition into coaching and enrolling at Ohio State.

While serving as a volunteer assistant coach at Ohio State, he gained head-coaching experience as the Columbus State Community College women's volleyball head coach in 2010-11.

He guided the Cougars to a 26-9 record, as well as a regional semifinals appearance. In less than one year at the helm, Burch implemented a study program which helped raise the team GPA from below 2.6 to above 3.0.

"Kevin has been diligently preparing for this opportunity since 2008 when he first became a Buckeye," Oman said. "He has showcased innovation, integration and adaptability over the past decade-plus while learning essential steps for success under a group of established leaders who are respected and admired throughout the volleyball community. Kevin has a clear and detailed view of Ohio State men's volleyball's past, present and future."

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