

SWOSU Picks Thurman to Lead Athletics Department

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford has called upon its own ultra-successful men's basketball coach to take an even larger responsibility as the school's new director of athletics.

Todd Thurman, 47, will remain as the school's basketball coach while serving in the dual capacity as athletics director beginning Aug. 1. He replaces Cecil Perkins who stepped aside after 27 years as the school's AD.

"I'm very excited and honored about the opportunity that President John Hays and the administration has entrusted me," Thurman said. "We share many of the same goals when it comes to our athletic program. A lot of work is ahead of us, but we are committed to building all our sports programs to an elite status in the Lone Star Conference and at NCAA Division II level."

Thurman, a native of Yukon, was recommended for the job by the university's selection committee. He assured President Hays that he could continue to successfully coach men's basketball and serve as the university's athletics director.

"We all look forward to his success in both areas," Hays said. "I believe he will do well for SWOSU, our student athletes and our athletic fans and supporters."

Thurman will be one of only two administrators in the 15-school Lone Star Conference that will handle coaching duties and serve as athletic director. Thurman believes that this new and unique dual assignment can work at SWOSU.

"I feel good about it because of the strong support staff we have in place particularly with (associate athletic director) Kelli Litsch and (assistant athletic director for external affairs) Rouben Tourian," Thurman said. "They are outstanding in their roles and will allow me to concentrate on learning how to best lead our athletic programs from the outset."

Thurman has gained wide-spread popularity in the community with his exciting style of basketball where the Bulldogs have quickly grown into a crowd favorite. Thurman's two SWOSU teams have each been ranked in the NCAA Division II Top 25 and have qualified for the Lone Star Conference Tournament. Last year's team finished with a 21-7 record, the most wins since 1984.

Overall his coaching record at SWOSU stands at 38-17 (.690). He is 169-99 (.630) in nine years as a head coach, which includes seven at Wayland Baptist University. Thurman led Wayland to a 131-82 (.615) record which included four trips (2002, 2003, 2004, 2006) to the NAIA National Tournament.

Prior to arriving at Wayland in 1999, he worked as an assistant coach for nine seasons at his alma mater Southern Nazarene University, and as an assistant at the University of Central Oklahoma and Oklahoma Christian University.

Thurman had an illustrious playing career and went on to play several years professionally in England, Argentina and the Philippines during the mid 1980's. An all-stater at Yukon High School, Thurman led the Millers to the 1979 state title and went on to earn all-American honors at nearby Bethany Nazarene. He led Bethany (now Southern Nazarene University) to its first NAIA title by scoring 39 points in the 1981 championship against Alabama-Huntsville.

Thurman holds dual degrees in Business Administration and education from SNU. He also earned a master's degree in higher education from Central Oklahoma.

Thurman and his wife Lynne have two boys: Nick, 18, and Alex, 15.