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Jackson takes charge

Furman University

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Jackson takes charge

Vanderbilt assistant appointed Paladin basketball coach

Furman dipped into the ranks of the Southeastern Conference this spring to find a new men's basketball coach when it named Jeff Jackson, an assistant at Vanderbilt University since 1999, to replace Larry Davis as head coach of the Paladins.

Jackson's appointment was announced April 24. Davis completed his nine-year run at Furman April 3 when he announced that he had accepted a position as associate head coach at the University of Cincinnati.

The 45-year-old Jackson, a native of Queens, N.Y., becomes Furman's 16th men's basketball coach. During his seven years as recruiting coordinator on Kevin Stallings' staff at Vanderbilt, the Commodores were invited to the NCAA Tournament once (in 2004, when they finished 23-10 and advanced to the Sweet 16) and to the National Invitation Tournament four times. In 2004 Jackson was named one of the top 25 recruiters in the nation by rivals.com, a Web site that offers extensive coverage of college and professional sports.

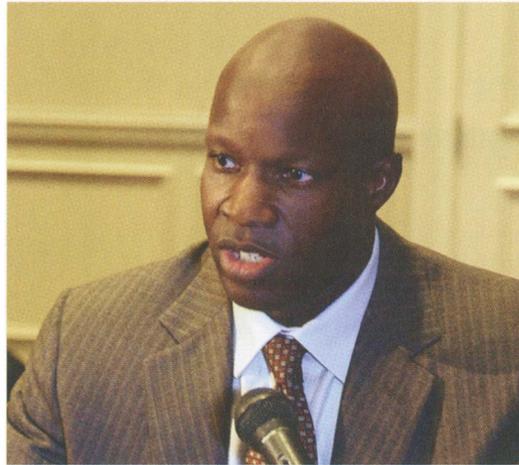
Vanderbilt posted a 17-13 record in 2005-06, was fourth in the SEC East with a 7-9 mark, and lost to Notre Dame in the NIT first round. Furman finished 15-13 last season and was fourth in the Southern Conference South Division with an 8-7 record.

In introducing Jackson, athletic director Gary Clark said, "We have secured an accomplished recruiter and experienced floor coach who will be an outstanding leader of our basketball program. He is also a gentleman of the highest integrity who will be an ideal ambassador for Paladin basketball."

For his part, Jackson was clearly delighted to have the job. "I understand the distinctive nature and opportunities inherent at an academically rigorous liberal arts college, and I embrace those qualities and look forward to the challenges," he said. "Furman is a good fit for me. It's the type of school I was hoping to become involved with."

He added that he had talked with a number of people with Furman connections in Nashville, Tenn., where Vanderbilt is located. In particular, the comments of Vanderbilt football coach Bobby Johnson, the former Furman coach, made an impact on him.

"Coach Johnson got me excited and intrigued," Jackson said. "It's clear that in many ways Furman is still in his heart, and his description of his experience here made it clear to me that it would be the kind of place I could be happy."



Jackson, a 1984 graduate of Cornell University with a degree in industrial and labor relations, began his career as an assistant at Southern California (one year) and went on to coach at St. Bonaventure (three years), Colorado State (three years) and Stanford (four years), where he was also recruiting coordinator. From 1996-99 he was head coach at New Hampshire, compiling a 21-60 record before resigning to accept the position at Vanderbilt.

He and his wife, Carolyn, have three children, Xavier (16), Jenai (13) and Taylor (9).

Jackson is familiar with the current Paladin squad. Vanderbilt beat Furman 81-60 last December after Furman led 38-36 at halftime. Four starters and seven of the top eight players from the 2005-06 Furman team are scheduled to return.

During Larry Davis' nine-year tenure, Furman compiled a 124-139 record. His final three squads recorded winning campaigns, going 48-38 overall and 25-22 in league play.

Furman last won the conference tournament and advanced to NCAA play in 1980. The Paladins' last post-season appearance was in 1991, when they participated in the National Invitation Tournament.

Watch for an in-depth profile of Furman basketball and Jeff Jackson in a forthcoming issue of the magazine.

Soccer star Dempsey named to U.S. World Cup squad

When the FIFA World Cup, the quadrennial world championship of soccer, begins June 8 in Germany, a former Furman star will be a member of the select United States squad.

Clint Dempsey '05, a three-year starter at Furman from 2001-03 before being drafted by the New England Revolution of Major League Soccer in the spring of 2004, was named to the 23-man American roster May 2

by coach Bruce Arena. The United States is scheduled to open World Cup play June 12 against the Czech Republic.

Dempsey, 23, is a native of Nacogdoches, Texas. One of eight midfielders on the U.S. team, Dempsey, who was profiled in the Fall 2005 issue of *Furman* magazine, has been praised for his explosiveness, creativity and skill with the ball.

Aside from soccer, he has another claim to fame: his hip-hop musical ability. He is talented enough that corporate giant Nike featured him in its recent advertising campaign designed to promote soccer's blue-collar roots. Dempsey performs under the name "Deuce" in a video titled "Don't Tread," which can be seen on-line at www.nike.com/nikesoccer/dtom.