

Richard “Rick” W. Sund Biography



Rick Sund - Class of 1969 - b. June 4, 1951 From the EHS Yearbook, Football 2-3-4: Captain 4, Basketball 2-3-4: Captain 3-4, Student Council Vice President 3, “E” Club, Baseball.

Rick began his managerial career in 1974 with the Milwaukee Bucks after graduating from Ohio University with a degree in sports administration. Sund holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from Northwestern University where he was a two-sport athlete, twice named academic All-Big Ten on the

basketball squad, while also seeing action as a tight end and wide receiver on the football team. At Northwestern, he joined Delta Upsilon Fraternity.

The expansion Dallas Mavericks hired him in 1979 at 28 years of age, making him the youngest general manager in the NBA’s history. He helped assemble the first ever Mavericks roster, and for the remainder of his multiple-year tenure around the organization, brought in Brad Davis, Rolando Blackman, Mark Aquirre, and others. His 1986-87 Mavericks won a then-franchise record 55 games and took home the Midwest division crown. They reached the Western Conference Finals The next year, but fell to the Los Angeles Lakers in seven games.

He aided the then-rookie general manager of the former Seattle SuperSonics, Wally Walker in 1994.

He moved on to the Detroit Pistons in 1995-96, a roller-coaster five seasons at the helm of a talented team holding a young Grant Hill. They made the playoffs four of six seasons Sund ran the front office, and while they did so, Sund traded Allan Houston (to New York) in 1996.

Sund then left for the Seattle SuperSonics, running the team for six seasons. During his tenure, Sund traded for Ray Allen (using franchise figure Gary Payton), drafted talented young players such as Nick Collison, and built his Sonics around Allen and fellow sharpshooter Rashard Lewis. In spite of this, the SuperSonics only made the playoffs twice during Sund’s six seasons as general manager.

With over 37 years of NBA experience, longtime league executive Rick Sund is the Hawks’ senior advisor, basketball operations, after having spent the prior four years as Atlanta’s Executive Vice President and General Manager. Sund saw the Hawks post a record of 184-128 under his leadership, reach the playoffs in each of his four seasons, advancing to the Eastern Conference semifinals three times.

Formerly the General Manager of the Seattle Sonics from 2001-07, Sund and the Sonics were the inaugural champions of the Northwest Division in 2004-05, and the team reached the postseason twice during his tenure. Prior to that, he served in several different capacities with the Dallas Mavericks from 1979-94, finishing up as Vice President of Basketball Operations. At the start of his tenure, he helped the expansion Mavericks develop their inaugural season roster as the Director of Player Personnel. Selected by team President Norm Sonju, Sund – at the age of 28 – became one of the youngest lead executives in the league.

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One of the NBA’s most-respected front office executives, Sund presided over a Mavericks team that won a franchise-record 55 games and took home the Midwest Division title in 1986-87. Dallas matched or improved their record in each of the franchise’s first eight seasons, reaching the playoffs on six occasions and making it to the Western Conference Finals in 1988.

In 1994, he spent one season as a consultant for the Sonics during Wally Walker’s first season as GM, managing the Sonics’ college scouting program and assisting Walker with personnel decisions.

Sund joined the Pistons as Vice President of Player Personnel in the summer of 1995, later assuming the title of Executive VP and General Manager of Basketball Operations. The Pistons, winners of 100 games in his first two seasons, participated in the playoffs four times during his Detroit years, where he spent six seasons (1995-2001).

Sund began his career in Milwaukee under the tutelage of Wayne Embry, spending five years with the Bucks after graduating with a master’s degree in sports administration from Ohio University in 1974.

He was a two-sport athlete at Northwestern University, where in basketball (as a 6-4 guard) he earned CoSIDA Academic All-America (third team) honors in 1973, and was twice named academic All-Big Ten, while also seeing action as a tight end and wide receiver on the football team. He holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from Northwestern.

Sund is a charter member of the advisory board for the University of Michigan’s Division of Kinesiology Sport Management. He previously served on the board of directors for the Special Olympics for the state of Washington, and was an advisory board member of the University of Oregon’s business school’s Warsaw Sports Marketing and Management Division.

Born on June 4, 1951, Sund has completed three marathons and a mini-triathlon. Richard Walker Sund is a native of Elgin, IL, and is a member of the Illinois Basketball Hall of Fame. He and his wife Lea are the parents of two children, daughter Hali and son Patrick, a member of the basketball operations staff of the Golden State Warriors.