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SPORTS

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Todd Allen new Elgin boys basketball coach

By: Jerry Fitzpatrick



New Elgin High School boys basketball coach Todd Allen, a 1988 Elgin graduate, talks with his Las Vegas Centennial High players.

Elgin alum Todd Allen has spent several nights on the opposition bench at Chesbrough Field House.

This season, he will be coaching the home team.

Allen, 48, has been named the new boys basketball coach at Elgin High School, athletic director Paul Pennington announced via release.

The 1988 Elgin graduate replaces David Hess, who resigned in early July after one season, citing family reasons.

"This is an exciting time," Allen said Monday. "It's crazy how things have developed over the last couple of weeks. When I saw the posting, I thought it would be a great opportunity considering the potential and the tradition at Elgin. I was looking to get back into it somewhere and was waiting for the right fit. Man, oh man. It's crazy how the timing worked out. God has a plan, I guess."

Allen was a baseball player at Elgin High for four years in former coach Dave Cooklin's program.

The son of Elgin graduate Lloyd Allen, who played basketball for legendary coach Bill Chesbrough in 1964-65, Todd likewise played basketball as a sophomore but was cut from the varsity. Nevertheless, he served as team manager and remained "a student of the game," he said.

After earning a bachelor's degree in Physical Education from UNLV and his Master's in Sports Administration, Allen volunteered as freshman coach at Las Vegas Centennial High in 2003.

He was named head coach seven years later and led Centennial from 2009-16, highlighted by a Nevada state runner-up finish in 2013. His teams went 156-43 and won four league titles.

Allen directed a program that sent seven players to Division-I college programs, most notably, Troy Brown, Jr., the No. 15 overall selection in the 2018 NBA draft by the Washington Wizards.

He stepped down at Centennial after the 2016 season due to a job opportunity in Illinois for his wife, Tina. He spent one season as assistant coach at Mundelein in 2017-18 and was itching to get back on the sideline, he said.

Pennington first got to know Allen when the coach twice brought Las Vegas Centennial to Elgin to compete in the since-discontinued Elgin Holiday Tournament. They crossed paths more recently when Allen showed up at Chesbrough to take in the occasional game at his alma mater.

"The timing was right," Pennington said of the match. "It's not an ideal situation with a coach leaving this time of year, but I think we've been able to create a positive situation. I think for our kids it will be a pretty seamless transition because coach Hess left things in a pretty positive place. We won't take any steps back with coach Allen coming in."

Elgin finished 6-24 overall last season, 3-15 in the Upstate Eight Conference. Allen said he looks forward to rebuilding the program with a defense-first mentality. He will be helped by longtime Elgin assistant coach Jeff Howard, who confirmed he will return.

"Our defense is our best offense," Allen said. "I want to build the whole program from the bottom up, making sure that starts at the freshmen level with all terminology the same so we're all on the same page when that freshman gets to varsity. Offense you can change year to year based on your personnel."

"I'm going to give it my all. I'm someone who has expectations for the program. I'll be someone who works hard and is there for the kids. Being unselfish and doing the right things on and off the court is what I'm all about."

Todd and Tina Allen reside in Carpentersville with their children Jordan Allen, Mia Allen, Miranda Pizzino and Nicco Morelli.