

Tenn. State's Basketball Coach Released

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Cy Alexander let go; Pittman will serve as interim HC

After coaching the Tigers' men's basketball team to 67 wins in the Ohio Valley Conference over the last six seasons, head coach Cy Alexander has been relieved of his duties as men's head basketball coach at Tennessee State University

Alexander, who came to TSU after 16 seasons at South Carolina State, has not experienced the same success here that he had at this previous job. During his five full seasons in Big Blue Country, the Tigers managed just a single trip to the OVC title game and failed to post a single winning record.

The lone OVC title appearance came just last season, and was supposed to be a starting point for the Tigers this season.

"We played well at the end of the season, winning five of our last seven games and making it to the OVC Championship game," said Alexander, in an interview at the beginning of the season.

"We are looking to carry that momentum over into this season."

However, the momentum did not carry too far over as the Tigers through the end of December played just a 3-9 record. Their 4-8 conference record has the Tigers tied for eighth in the 10-team OVC. They were picked to finish fifth in this year.

Mark Pittman will serve as the Interim Head Coach for the remainder of the season. Pittman served previously as an assistant coach and recruiting coordinator under Alexander at South Carolina State University from 1989-92.

Directly prior to joining the Tigers in 2003, Pittman was an administrative assistant at Jacksonville University 1998 -2001 and worked as an assistant coach at Florida Community College 1996-1998.

Student response has been varied regarding Alexander's firing. Some students said they were hurt about the decision to fire the coach, while others said they could care less.

Marvin Woolfolk, a junior art major from Denver, said he feels indifferent about the firing.

"Well I do not follow the team much, they have not had a winning season since I been here so I do not really care about it," Woolfolk said.

Still, others said they felt that the decision came so early and not at the end of the season.

"It is a bad idea to fire him; he can not play the game for the kids so why should he take the blame for the players," said Darius Booth, a junior dental hygiene major from Humboldt, Tenn.

With just seven games left before the start of the OVC tournament, Pittman will get a chance to evaluate the team. According Athletic Director Teresa Phillips, the bottom line is that there needs to be success outside of the classroom.

"Our young men are graduating, but somewhere in here we have to have the on-the-court success and that just has not happened," Phillips said.

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Patrick Comer is sports editor of The Meter, the Tennessee State University student newspaper, which originally published this article.