

Phillips next head men's basketball coach

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Russell Phillips has been appointed head men's basketball coach at Alfred University, athletic director Paul Vecchio has announced.

Phillips comes to AU from Hobart College, where he was the top assistant under head coach Mike Neer the last five seasons. He replaces former AU head coach Dale Wellman, who resigned this summer to take the head coaching job at Nebraska Wesleyan.

"I am very excited to welcome Russell Phillips, and his wife Emilie, to our Saxon athletic family and look forward to a very bright future with him at the helm of our men's basketball program," Vecchio commented. "Russ has worked alongside some of the finest Division III coaches in the country and has learned first-hand how a high level program operates while forging a reputation as one of the hardest-working and finest recruiters in the region."

"I am honored and very excited to be the new head men's basketball coach at Alfred University. I am very appreciative of the opportunity given to me by Paul Vecchio and Kathy Woughter (vice president of Student Affairs at AU)," said Phillips. "Under Coach Wellman the program has grown and achieved great success both on and off the court and is in a great place. I can't wait to start building relationships with our student-athletes and to continue to build on the past success."

Phillips began his collegiate coaching career in 2007, as a student assistant at his alma mater, SUNY Cortland, under head coach Tom Spanbauer. The following season (2008-09), he served as top assistant to Spanbauer who, coincidentally, is a former AU head coach (1995-96). While at Cortland, Phillips recruited two SUNYAC all-league players, including the school's all-time scoring leader, Jesse Winter.

Phillips left Cortland after the 2008-09 season to become Neer's top assistant at Hobart. While at Hobart, Phillips helped coach a Statesmen team that has been one of the most successful in all of Division III. In the last five years, Hobart has gone a combined 104-38, won two Liberty League championship tournaments and appeared in the NCAA championship tournament three times.

The Statesmen also competed in two ECAC Upstate Championship tournament appearances during Phillips' tenure at Hobart, winning once, and claimed four Liberty League regular season titles. Phillips helped coach a pair of All-Americans and 15 Liberty League all-stars, including two league Players of the Year, two league Freshmen of the Year, and three Defensive Players of the Year.

Phillips has extensive experience coaching outside the collegiate arena. Since 2007, he has worked at several basketball camps. In addition to coaching at Hobart's camp the last five years, he has worked at camps hosted by University at Buffalo, Keystone State, SUNY Cortland, Lemoyne College, and Syracuse University. He was an

assistant coach at the Western Scholastic Boys Basketball Empire State Games in 2007-08 and from 2005-08 served as head coach for U15, U16 and U17 Rochester-area AAU teams.

AU is coming off an 18-9 season in 2013-14, the program's winningest in 25 years. The Saxons made their first-ever appearance in the Empire 8 Conference championship tournament and competed in the ECAC South Championship tournament. Several key members of that team, including three starters, return to provide a solid nucleus for Phillips' first year at AU.

"With the talent returning in our program and the energy, determination and focus that I know Russ will be bringing, I am looking forward to some great years ahead with Saxon basketball," Vecchio said.

Phillips said he was impressed by his visit to the Alfred University campus, referring to a remodeled McLane Center gymnasium and new health and wellness annex, as well as a broad range of academic offerings. He looks forward to becoming part of the AU community.

"Throughout the interview process and my time on campus my excitement for Alfred continued to grow. Everyone that I came into contact with had such a strong passion for Alfred that is truly exciting to become a part of," he said. "With new and updated facilities, a wide range of curriculum from business administration to engineering to sports management, and great people on campus; Alfred is a place that will continue to attract high-level student-athletes that want to compete and win at the highest levels."