

[Tuesday, April 24, 2001]

Dunn selected as coach for USA Basketball team

By Adam Gorney
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Penn State men's basketball coach Jerry Dunn has accepted a coaching job, except it isn't with the Nittany Lions.

At least, not yet.

Dunn, who coached the Nittany Lions to the Sweet 16 this past season and is currently in contract negotiations with Penn State Athletic Director Tim Curley, was selected by the USA Basketball Men's Collegiate Committee to coach the 2001 USA Basketball Men's World University Games Team.

Since Dunn's contract ran out at the end of the season, he and Curley have not come to an agreement on an extension, but at his final news conference of the season, Dunn said he is confident he will return to The Bryce Jordan Center sidelines next season.

Dunn and his assistants, Mississippi coach Rod Barnes and Boston College headman Al Skinner, will prepare the team to play in Beijing Aug. 22 through Sept. 1. The 2001 USA Basketball Men's National Team Trials will be held at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., on June 1 to 3.

The three coaches representing the United States will face Iran, South Africa and Turkey in preliminary action.

"I am very fortunate to have both Rod Barnes and Al Skinner on the staff," Dunn said in a USA Basketball press release. "They have done outstanding jobs at their respective programs. As good as they are coaches, they are even better people and I'm looking forward to working with both of them."

The USA team's task won't be an easy one because they have high expectations to continue. The USA World University Games team is currently on a 40-game winning streak and is looking to capture its seventh consecutive gold medal.

This isn't Dunn's first venture into the USA Basketball system. He was an assistant coach under Arizona State coach Rob Evans on the 1999 USA Basketball Men's Junior World Championship Team that went 7-1 and won the silver medal.

Barnes, who is entering his first assignment with USA Basketball, said he is proud to be mentioned with such successful coaches as Dunn and Skinner and added that he feels it is a privilege to be on the coaching staff for the summer stint in late August and September.

"I am thrilled with the chance not only to coach some of the nation's most talented players, but also to learn more about the game of basketball," the Rebels coach said. "This is a tremendous privilege for me and I look forward to representing the United States, USA Basketball and the University of Mississippi at the World University Games this summer."

Skinner coached his Boston College squad to a 27-5 record this past season, the most wins in Golden Eagles history. Skinner had his team flip-flop from the bottom of the Big East standings directly to the top in only one year and finished the season No. 7.

"Any time you have a chance to represent your country, you have a reason to be excited," Skinner said. "You know that at the end of the event you will know that much more about college basketball. This will be a very good experience and I'm looking forward to it."



PHOTO: Gordon Marshall

Jerry Dunn, Penn State men's basketball coach, accepted a coaching job with a USA Basketball men's team.