

Coach

Doug Meacham:

One small newspaper ad has made a big difference in his professional life

By Bruce Smith
Matchup

Doug Meacham remembers the most-important day of his life vividly.

It wasn't the day he was married. Well, it probably was. But this is a basketball program and it's a good story, so we'll hope his wife, Tami, will give us some latitude.

Let's go back to the Fall, 1993. Meacham was in his early 20s and attending the University of Utah. After graduating from American Fork High, he moved on to Snow College, then served an LDS Church mission, went to Utah Valley, and then on to the U.

OK. Take a breath.

There, at the U., Meacham read an advertisement in the school newspaper that Utah basketball coach Rick Majerus was looking for walk-on players.

"It was a crazy idea," said Meacham, who had been the point guard at American Fork for two years and the quarterback on the Cavemen football team. "I was there (at the U.) at a great time, and gave it my best shot. It ended up being one of the best times of my life."

Meacham made the team. For two seasons, he was on the Ute roster that included eventual NBA stars like Keith Van Horn, Michael Doleac, Andre Miller and others. As a senior, Meacham's team reached the Sweet 16 of the NCAA tournament.

"Every day at practice, I was guarding Andre," he said. "He was a great player and he turned me into a better player."

The next year, Meacham served as a graduate assistant for Majerus, and the Utes made



Coach Doug Meacham has won 131 games in 10 seasons at American Fork, including a phenomenal 21 last year.

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the Elite Eight.

“Playing for him (Majerus) was great,” Meacham said. “That’s when I realized I wanted to be a (basketball) coach. I tried to pick up everything I could from him ... except the swearing.”

While at Utah, Meacham remembers telling Majerus that his dream job would be coaching at his alma mater. Surprisingly, it didn’t take long for that to happen.

In the meantime, the following season - 1996-97 - was one of Utah’s best. Meacham moved back to American Fork and became a social studies teacher and assistant basketball coach. However, he still closely followed the Utes. When Utah made the Final Four, he and his new wife packed the car and drove to San Antonio, Texas, where he saw the players he knew so well beat North Carolina in the semifinals, and then lose to Kentucky in the championship game.

Those days still stick with him, and it’s noticeable.

For instance, Meacham believes in loyalty. He’s strongly associated with the Cavemen and the Utes. He wears his school colors most of the time, and proudly lauds the achievements of anyone associated with each.

After serving as an assistant to Bob Eckles, who headed the AF basketball program from 1986-2001, Meacham happily accepted the head job. Now sleeping through his 11th year (he’s dreaming ... remember), Meacham has had an up-and-down career but owns an impressive record of 131-102 (.562).

Last year was his best, when he led the Cavemen to a 21-4 mark and a spot in the 5A championship game. Like the Utes, they lost in the title game.

Like that 1996-97 season, Meacham enjoyed the ride but being the runner-up isn’t what it’s cracked up to be, a fact many American Fork teams have learned in its storied history that goes back to 1902.

But Meacham’s dream continues to live on and anything can happen. He continues to pursue a championship here and has another team, made up of Tami (married 14 years) and their four children: Sydnee (12), McKay (10), Cy (7) and Nash (3).

Another day worth remembering is hopefully on the horizon.

