Wolf Pack welcomes coach Lee Nelson

The new head coach of the Nevada volleyball team didn’t really need an introduction to the University. When he stepped onto campus in January to take over the program, it was as much a homecoming as it was a beginning.

Lee Nelson ‘05 M.A. addresses the team.

After years as a successful assistant coach, Lee Nelson ‘05 M.A. (history) gets his first head coaching opportunity at a school he knows well. A Southern California native, the 47-year-old Nelson has experience coaching within the Wolf Pack volleyball program and holds a master’s degree from Nevada.

“It is a tremendous opportunity to be head coach of the Nevada volleyball program,” said Nelson, who came to Nevada after working the last three seasons at the University of Miami.

One season after Nevada’s first-ever NCAA Tournament appearance in 1998, Nelson joined the program as an assistant, and he would coach a number of all-conference selections, including Kelli LaBossiere ’03 (general studies) and Nevada Hall of Famers Suzanne Stonebarger ’03 (speech communication) and Michelle More ’05 (management).

While Nelson stepped away from the program after one season following a death in his family, the Wolf Pack would go on to four more NCAA appearances during the early 2000s. Nelson returned as a graduate student and earned a master’s in history in 2005. With a blueprint of those successful teams in mind and with the Pack now competing in the rigorous Mountain West, Nelson has hit the ground running.

“Lee has played, recruited and coached at the highest levels of the sport,” athletics director Doug Knuth said. “He is a man of great character and integrity who will instantly relate with our current players, recruits, parents and everyone who comes in contact with the volleyball program.” Nelson was the associate head coach at UC Santa Barbara, another alma mater of his, for four seasons on the men’s side and helped the Gauchos to an appearance in the NCAA Championship match. That led him to Miami, where he was an integral part of three-straight NCAA Tournament teams with the Hurricanes.

Nelson was a standout player for the UCSB men’s program and helped the Gauchos to an appearance in the NCAA Championship match in 1988. He played professionally in Finland and The Netherlands before continuing his education and embarking on a coaching career that includes time at high school and club levels, in addition to serving as an assistant coach for top men’s and women’s programs in the country.

—Chad Hartley ’03, associate athletics director of communications

Quick hits

- Wolf Pack football team played in its ninth bowl game in the last 10 years.
- The Nevada swimming and diving team placed third at the Mountain West Championships and took home four major awards: Yawen Li, MW Swimmer of the Year; Krysta Palmer, MW Diver of the Year; Jian Li You, MW Diving Coach of the Year for the third straight year and Abby Stukettie, MW Coach of the Year honor.
- The Nevada baseball team opened 2015 with a surge, beating No. 5 Texas Tech in the first weekend and taking the early lead in the Mountain West Conference race with series wins over Fresno State, UNLV and New Mexico. Along the way, the Wolf Pack entered the national rankings, as high as No. 23 (College Baseball Central) and No. 28 (Collegiate Baseball), Senior Austin Byler and junior Ryan Howell are among the nation’s leaders in home runs and Carson City native Adam Whitl has emerged as a dominant relief pitcher, leading nation in saves through the first six weeks of the season.
- The collective grade-point average for all of Nevada’s nearly 400 student-athletes was a 3.019 — a “B” average overall. Women’s teams produced a 3.2 GPA and men’s teams scored a 2.8 GPA.
- Five programs recorded a team GPA of 3.0 or better:
  - women’s basketball
  - women’s cross country
  - women’s golf
  - women’s swimming & diving and rifle
  - 44 percent of all student-athletes, 177 in all, had a GPA of 3.0 or better.
  - 39 student-athletes from fall teams earned Academic All-MW accolades (up from 34 from the previous fall semester).
  - 16 student-athletes produced a perfect 4.0 GPA for the semester.
  - Football team captain and starting linebacker Jordan Dobrich was named to the Capital One CoSIDA Academic All-District team for carrying a 3.9 GPA in engineering.

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Message from the Athletics Director

Fans of Wolf Pack athletics have much to celebrate this year. We brought the Fremont Cannon home this football season; our basketball teams enjoyed wins over UNLV on the same day in early January; the swimming and diving team almost swept the conference awards (winning swimmer and diver of the year honors while also taking home swim coach and diving coach of the year recognition), and the baseball team set the school record for wins at the start of the season.

While individual and team accolades are great, Wolf Pack teams really shine in the most important area—the classroom! In the fall semester our combined Grade Point Average, including almost 400 students, was 3.019. That’s a “B” average and shows remarkable effort by our students, coaches and staff.

Our success in the classroom and in competition is a direct result of your financial support. Your donations allow us to provide the very best opportunities for our teams to compete in the very strong Mountain West Conference. Your contributions support academic excellence, recruiting outreach, nutrition and much more to give the Wolf Pack an edge. You are the team behind the teams.

Please help us find more people to back the Pack in 2015. Your support is essential to our continued success. Contact us at (775) 348-PACK to find out how you can help.

Sincerely,

Doug Knuth
Athletics Director

Nevada Athletics Financial Information for Fiscal Year 2014

Revenues

- Contributions $4,948,145
- Ticket Sales $3,959,255
- Direct State Support $4,565,230
- Student Fees $2,467,010
- NCAA Conference Distribution $3,181,470
- Endowment Income $333,425
- Concessions/Program Sales $245,595
- Broadcast/TV/Radio $400,000
- Other $1,383,455
- Guarantees $1,136,500
- Royalties/Licensing/Advertising $1,053,350

Expenses

- Salaries $9,285,330
- Team Travel $2,493,330
- Student Financial Aid $6,034,150
- Other $2,633,415
- Debt Service $515,630
- Game Expenses $1,039,075
- Direct Institutional Support $1,485,070
- Indirect Facilities/Adm. Support $1,252,200
- Equipment $686,880
- Medical Expenses $196,120
- Recruiting $543,215
- Marketing/Promotions/Fundraising $376,940
- Indirect Facilities/Administrative Support $1,767,405
- NCAA Conference Distribution $3,181,470
- Other $1,383,455

Source: NCAA Financial Report