

MIZZOU

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Around the Columns

Mizzou has Haith

By Marcus Wilkins

As Frank Haith approached the podium in front of a packed house at Mizzou Arena's Clinton Club April 5, 2011, the new Missouri men's head basketball coach was greeted with his first "M-I-Z, Z-O-U" chant.

"I'm already impressed," said the former University of Miami coach. "Let's go play a game."



Frank Haith was introduced as the new head coach of the University of Missouri men's basketball program. He previously led the Miami Hurricanes from 2004 to 2011.

Haith, who rebuilt a stalled Hurricane program from 2004 to 2011, immediately addressed the fan criticism that bubbled up earlier this week.

"I want that as a positive," he said of Tiger Nation's passionate reaction. "I want to win. I want to cut down nets. I'm not mad — I get it."

Haith was the coach at Miami for seven years. Five of those seasons he guided the Hurricanes into postseason play, including the NIT.

He becomes the 17th men's basketball coach at Mizzou, replacing Mike Anderson, who resigned March 23, 2011, to take the same position at the University of Arkansas.

The new Tiger coach outlined his priorities as a leader — from academic success to X's and O's.

“The first thing I say when I go into a player’s home is that you don’t go to school to play basketball,” Haith said. “You go to school *and* play basketball.”

Haith, 46, brings wife Pam, son Corey, 17, and daughter Brianna, 6, from South Beach. He inherits a team that returns six seniors in 2011–12. Although Laurence Bowers and Kim English made themselves eligible for the NBA Draft Monday, neither will hire an agent so they can return for their senior season if they are not drafted.

“[Texas Coach] Rick Barnes is probably my best friend in the business, and the one thing he taught me is how to adapt based on your personnel,” Haith said. “Here’s my philosophy from a basketball standpoint: I want player movement, I want ball movement, I want great spacing, I like playing inside out and I like getting easy buckets in transition.”

The players like his philosophy.

“He and Coach Anderson have some similarities, and a lot of our guys are happy with that because we like the way we play,” said junior guard Michael Dixon. “But I don’t think a little more instruction would hurt us at all.”



Senior forward Laurence Bowers fields questions from the media after new head Coach Frank Haith's introductory press conference.

“I was at home during spring break just wondering who we were going to get,” said

Bowers, who was relieved that the search is over. “On the outside, people need to give him a chance. I really believe he’ll do a great job here.”

Haith developed a reputation as a top-talent recruiter in the Big 12 region during his time as an assistant at Texas and Texas A&M. He listed a quality big man as a high priority, and he’s ready to blaze the recruiting trail later this week.

“We need some size, and as soon as I was told that I was going to be the next head basketball coach here, we went to work on that,” Haith said.

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