

Petersen sheds 'interim' tag at Kirkwood

Written by Jim Ecker
Thursday, 27 March 2014 08:53 -



Bryan Petersen can cut the "interim" tag off his warmup suit at Kirkwood Community College now.

The job is all his.

Kirkwood has named Petersen, 26, the official men's basketball coach after he served as the interim coach this past season.

Doug Wagemester stepped aside as the coach after the 2012-13 campaign following 15 years at the helm to devote more time to his duties as the school's athletic director, but he mulled the possibility of returning as head coach after a year's absence.

On second thought, he's decided things have worked out just fine. Petersen compiled a 21-10 record as the interim coach and Wagemester liked what he saw.

Petersen played for Wagemester at Kirkwood and served as an assistant coach for one season before moving into the interim position.

"Bryan took the reigns of the program and hit the ground running," said Wagemester. "It's a whole new ballgame when you step into the head coaching role.

"To get 21 wins in your first season is a great start. We are really looking forward to his continued success at Kirkwood."

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Petersen said the "interim" tag never bothered him.

"I really didn't think about it that much," he said. "I just thought about, 'How can we be successful? How can we get this thing going?'"

"It really didn't cross my mind a whole lot. I was more concerned with how our team was playing. That was the biggest thing."

Wagemester was a visible presence at the home games, but Petersen never felt like his former coach was looking over his shoulder.

"He's been unbelievable for me," said Petersen. "He's been more of a resource than anything."

"I've had a lot of questions. I still have questions. So I go to him a lot and try to get his thoughts on a lot of things."

"This was his program for so long. He built it to where it is. You definitely think of some of the things he's done and he's built, just trying to carry that on."

Petersen was named an All-American at Kirkwood during his playing days, then finished his basketball career as a point guard at Iowa State. He was a member of Fred Hoiberg's staff at ISU before returning to Kirkwood as an assistant coach for the 2012-13 season.

Petersen said he had a high "comfort level" at Kirkwood when he became the interim head coach, considering his background at the school.

"No question. It's a lot of familiar faces," he said. "Playing here and knowing what this place is all about, I think it definitely helped."

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Petersen was not entirely satisfied with Kirkwood's 21-10 record this year, especially its 4-9 record in away games.

"I wish we could have done more. There's no doubt," he said. "But it was a great learning experience, especially for me personally.

"I really enjoyed the team, I really enjoyed the experience. I'm just looking to build on it in the years to come."

Petersen acknowledged that it "feels good" to lose the interim tag.

"To be officially told, 'Hey, you're our guy,' it feels very, very good. That's for sure," he said.