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Success Story

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Success Story

08.19.2008 | Campus and Community, Faculty, Athletics The University of Dayton announced today that Vice President and Director of Athletics Ted Kissell will retire as the Flyer AD, effective Jan. 1. During his 16-year tenure, the Dayton Flyers performed at high levels on the field and in the classroom, notching a reputation as a national leader in the academic performance of its student-athletes.

Kissell, who joined UD as director of athletics in the summer of 1992 and was named a vice president five years later, will continue to be involved with the University, working on several leadership initiatives through June 30, 2009.

"My decision has nothing to do with what I'm doing — I love my job — and everything to do with the important things that there has been too little time for," Kissell said. "UD is a special place, and I've done my best to be a good steward of our athletics programs and tradition. I'm very proud to have had the opportunity to make a contribution to the University of Dayton and very proud to be a Flyer."

Kissell, 62, leaves behind a University of Dayton athletics division far different from the one he took over in 1992. He transformed Flyer athletics by focusing on improving performance on the field, performance in the classroom, facilities and coaches. The result: A truly successful broad-based program that won at an unprecedented rate last season and achieved national acclaim for its student-athlete graduation rate.

"During his tenure, Ted Kissell transformed UD athletics, setting the bar high for performance on the playing fields and in the classrooms," said Daniel J. Curran, president of the University of Dayton. "He's a strong leader who built upon UD's rich, storied athletic tradition with integrity, vision and savvy."

The last 10 years have been arguably the most successful in the history of University of Dayton athletics in all four areas:

- * more championships than in any previous decade;
- * continued high graduation rates and academic honors;
- * unprecedented facility improvement and expansion;
- * more honors for coaches at the conference, regional and national levels.

Kissell is going out on top. Last year was the most successful "team" year in UD history. Dayton's final winning percentage for 2007-08 in football, volleyball, men's and women's soccer, men's and women's basketball, baseball and softball was .629. The next-best year the Flyers ever had was 2002-03, when UD had a .574 winning percentage. Since 1998, UD has won 26 conference championships and had 20 teams reach post-season play. In the previous nine years, the Flyers had seven conference championships and one tournament appearance. Since 2000, the Dayton men's basketball team is averaging more than 20 wins per season. That has only happened in two decades in UD history: the 1950s and the 1960s.

Strong performance on the field has not come at the expense of a high level of performance in the classroom. The Flyers' combined cumulative grade point average has steadily risen during Kissell's tenure, and it is currently the highest in school history (3.209). UD's 95 rating in the NCAA's latest Graduation Success Rate report is the best in the Atlantic 10 Conference and ranks in the top 5 percent among the nation's 330 Division I institutions.

Every campus-based sport has seen its facilities undergo major improvements during Kissell's tenure. A major step forward was the development of the Arena Sports Complex, the 25-acre home to UD's basketball, football, baseball, softball and track teams.

The University of Dayton Arena has been the home of Flyer basketball since 1969, but the addition of the Donohoe Basketball Center in 1998 and the extensive renovation of the Arena itself that was completed in 2002 have kept it among the nation's best basketball venues.

But the facility upgrades mean nothing if the right people — people who fit the University's core values — aren't also recruited and hired. Before Kissell came to UD, only four Flyer coaches had been named conference coaches of the year. Since his arrival on campus, Dayton has had 22.

UD's 63 percent winning percentage in 2007-08 didn't happen by accident. Neither did the men's golf team's second place in the A-10 championships, nor the track team's runner-up finish in both the indoor and outdoor conference meets. Those efforts were guided by prototype "Kissell coaches" — a group of dedicated young coaches who are in their first jobs at this level.

In the 16 years Kissell served as the sixth director of athletics in UD history, the division's budget grew from \$4.6 million to \$18 million. Revenues grew from \$2.8 million to more than \$12 million, and annual fundraising increased from \$250,000 to \$5 million. In addition, the total for athletic capital projects fundraising since 1992 is \$30 million.

While Kissell's main duties for the University have been as director of athletics, he also serves on the President's Cabinet and the President's Council. In 2005-06, he helped lead a diversity and inclusion task force on campus.

Kissell is in his second term on the Atlantic 10's Management Committee, serves on the A-10 Men's Basketball Committee and chairs the Men's Basketball Scheduling Committee. Kissell also has served as chair of the A-10's Marketing Committee (2002-03), Finance Committee (2004-05) and Corporate Sponsorship Committee (2004-05).

Kissell's family includes his wife, Deanna, four children (Ted Jr., Jennifer, Sarah and Katie) and three grandsons (Teo, Gabriel, and Jack). He is a native of Chicago.

In January, Tim Wabler, UD's associate vice president for athletics, will be formally introduced as the University's next vice president and director of athletics.