



End

TROPHY LIFE: With Neer as coach, the men's basketball team won a national title in 1990 and reached the Final Four three other times (1992, 2002, and 2005).

By Scott Hauser

The last time the Rochester men's basketball team tipped off a season without the familiar 6-foot-7 frame of legendary coach Mike Neer '88W (MS) at courtside Gerald Ford was president, *Rocky* was the No. 1 movie, and Paul Simon was singing about "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover."

Since then, the Yellowjackets have won a national title, made four trips to the Final Four, earned 12 bids to the national championship—including four straight—and won 563 games.

It's time to reset the record books as Neer, the winningest coach in Rochester's history—and one of the winningest in all of NCAA Division III—is stepping down at the end of the academic year.


"It has been an honor and a privilege to lead teams representing the University of Rochester," Neer said in making the announcement public this spring. "I am proud of our teams' many accomplishments and of the manner in which we've competed. It has been equally gratifying to see our players continue their success in their personal and professional lives. In addition to these players, I want to express my appreciation and thanks to the countless administrators, faculty, and athletics department colleagues with whom I've worked since 1976."

Since Neer took over the Yellowjackets for the 1976–77 season, he has compiled a career record of 563 wins against 326 losses (a 63.3 percent winning ratio). On January 5, 2007, he earned his 500th career coaching victory, a milestone that was marked with a University proclamation presented to Neer by President Joel Seligman, G. Robert Witmer '59, then the chair of the University's Board of Trustees, and George VanderZwaag, the director of Athletics and Recreation.

"Mike Neer's coaching record at Rochester has been truly remarkable," says Seligman

On and off the court, Rochester players have distinguished themselves through their hard work and achievement. Five of Neer's players earned Academic All-American honors. His alumni have found success in education, law, medicine, business, finance, telecommunications, and coaching.

As a team, the Yellowjackets have been honored four times with the Sam Schoenfeld Award from the western New York chapter of the College Basketball Officials Association. The award is presented annually to a college for outstanding sportsmanship.

"I want to thank Mike for his 34 years of service to the University and our students," VanderZwaag says. "He is a true coaching legend, and his legacy at Rochester will endure." 

Neer Numbers

7 Number of presidential administrations since Neer started coaching at Rochester in 1976—Ford, Carter, Reagan, G. H. Bush, Clinton, G. W. Bush, Obama

1 Number of national titles (1990)

43 Number of points Rochester scored in its championship game victory over DePauw (Ind.) University (1990)

42 Number of points DePauw scored in that game

4 Number of Final Four appearances under Neer (1990, 1992, 2002, 2005)

3 Number of championship game appearances (1990, 1992, 2005)

97 Number of wins by the class of 2005 over four years—the highest win total for any class at Rochester

10 Number of JPMorgan Chase/Wendy's Classic titles that Neer's teams won (the most of any school)

12 Number of NCAA playoff appearances

12 Number of consecutive winning seasons (1998–99 through 2009–10)

25 Number of seasons above .500 in 34 years

8 Number of wins in his first season (1976–77)

1979–80 First winning season under Neer (15–9 record)

1980–81 First NCAA playoff appearance under Neer

1,242 Total number of victories in men's basketball at Rochester since 1901–02 season

45.3 Percentage of those victories coached by Neer

9th Where Neer stood in victories among active Division III coaches at the end of the 2009–10 season

of an Era

Legendary men's basketball coach Mike Neer '88W (MS) announces his retirement.