

Ryan Pannone introduced as new Red Wolves basketball head coach



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE JONESBORO SUN

A-State Vice Chancellor of Intercollegiate athletics Jeff Purinton poses for pictures with new Red Wolves men's basketball coach Ryan Pannone

ALLIE CARSON

STAFF WRITER

WILL LIVINGSTON

POSITION

Following the departure of former Red Wolves basketball coach Bryan Hodgson for the University of South Florida, Arkansas State University announced March 29 that the team will replace Hodgson with Ryan Pannone. Pannone was previously the

assistant coach at the University of Alabama. Crimson Tide head coach Nate Oats said Pannone helped boost the team's highest scoring average and lead the Crimson Tide to the Final Four and the Elite Eight in the NCAA tournament in consecutive years.

Pannone also has 18 years of coaching at the professional level, with assistant coaching jobs taking him to teams in China and Israel. Pannone was the head coach for 2 seasons at BC Prievdza of the Extraliga

in Slovakia. Pannone also has head coaching experience in the NBA G League as the coach of the Birmingham Squadron.

An introductory press conference was held on Friday for Pannone. "Ninety-five percent of success in higher education is who you hire, and I am really proud to be part of the team that brought Coach here to Arkansas State University," ASU Systems President Brendan Kelly said, "Today,

we get to celebrate bringing a great person, great family and great coach to Jonesboro."

Chancellor Todd Shields was introduced next and talked about the season the men's team had and the impact made on the basketball culture at A-State by Hodgson.

"I want to extend a special thanks to coach Bryan Hodgson and his entire team. Coach Hodgson created a remarkable excitement and energy in our men's basketball program, creating a strong foundation of success upon which we will continue to build," Shields said.

Pannone has put in effort to get students, fans and donors involved. From introducing himself to students on campus and buying meals for students to holding fundraisers, Pannone has been a busy man in his first week with the Red Wolves.

"Coach Pannone joined coffee clubs across the city, met in country clubs for dinner, purchased hundreds of dollars from his own wallet of Chick-Fil-A for students in the cafeteria and bought dozens of pizzas for student groups across campus," Shields said, "His actions and values will help not only men's basketball, but A-State athletics, the university and our entire community."

During his opening statement, Pannone hit on his values and what he cares about, his coaching

experience, and how Arkansas State feels like a community.

"Jeff talked about it, you can't do it alone and every coach that's in this room appreciates the support that all of the fans, the sponsors, the donors, the athletic department has given," Pannone said.

Pannone has already begun to build a staff at Arkansas State. On the suggestion of his predecessor, Pannone hired assistant coach Hayden Sowers. "I got the job and he texted me saying 'Hey. Sowers. Hire him. Don't screw this up. I didn't know Hayden, never talked to him and never spoke to him but Bryan recommended him really, really well,'" Pannone said.

Sowers was most recently the head coach of the South Plains Texans, a junior college in Levelland, Texas. The Texans made a Final Four run in the NJCAA Tournament as the 7-seed before falling to Connors State, a school on a Cinderella run as a 17-seed. Sowers also has experience in the SEC as a grad assistant at Ole Miss.

Pannone also hired assistant coach Max Thorpe. Thorpe is quite young, as he played at guard for the Florida State Seminoles just two seasons ago. Thorpe was on the staff at Alabama as a graduate assistant last season.

In terms of recruiting players, Pannone has big plans in that department too.

During his coaching career,

Pannone has coached all around the world, from China to Israel and from South Korea to Germany. He said these international coaching jobs shaped who he is as a person more than anything and he plans to recruit international players for the team.

"I've always said when I became a college head coach, I was going to build a team with multiple international players," Pannone said, "I've got the relationships. We're going to be able to do that. What is really cool is when you're in a community that also wants it."

Pannone also said he's looking to retain players from this season. The proof of this was present in the press conference room, as A-State guard Derrian Ford made an appearance for the event.

Pannone said his coaching style is about confidence and belief.

"You can't play fast and open and free if guys don't have the confidence, they don't believe the game is full of mistakes. Basketball is a game full of mistakes. I will make mistakes," Pannone said, "Our goal is to help them make less mistakes. But when players have to worry constantly about making mistakes, they can't play with confidence."

Red Wolves fall to top-ranked Razorbacks 7-3



PHOTO COURTESY OF A-STATE ATHLETICS

Red Wolves pitcher Kole Turner delivers a pitch to the Razorbacks.

WILL LIVINGSTON

SPORTS EDITOR

In the capper of a road trip of ranked opponents, the Arkansas State Red Wolves baseball team traveled to Fayetteville to take on the number one ranked Arkansas Razorbacks.

A-State came to Fayetteville after losing a weekend series to Coastal Carolina. The Red Wolves dropped their first two games of the series to the twenty-first ranked Chanticleers before finally closing the series with a victory.

The Razorbacks spent the previous weekend in a very different fashion. Arkansas swept the maligned Missouri Tigers and scored 51 runs in three games in the process. As the Tennessee Volunteers lost their series to the unranked Texas A&M Aggies, Arkansas was ranked first in the country this week by D1Baseball.com, the NCAA's main ranking outlet for baseball.

Pitcher Kole Turner got the start for the Red Wolves. Turner pitched for 4.2 innings, allowing 4 hits, 3 earned runs and striking out 6 Hogs.

Both teams were scoreless in the first inning. In the second inning, A-State struck first as left fielder Jake Henry Williams smacked an RBI double with two men on base. The hit

allowed second baseman Cason Campbell to come home and score the first run of the game.

The Razorbacks scored to match A-State when Hogs right fielder Carson Boles scored on an RBI single hit by Arkansas second baseman Nolan Souza. This RBI tied the game 1-1.

The Red Wolves responded in the top of the third inning. Cason Tollett hit a sacrifice fly to right field. Boles committed a throwing error from right field and allowed the runners to advance, including first baseman Wil French making it across home. The score went back in favor of A-State 2-1.

The score remained here until the bottom of the fifth inning. The Red Wolves sat Turner in favor of reliever Carson Keithley for the last out of the fifth. Keithley proceeded to allow Razorbacks left fielder Charles Davalan to bash a three-run home run to left field to make the game a 4-3 lead for Razorbacks.

In the top of the sixth inning, Campbell hit an RBI single to allow right fielder Cross Jumper to score and tie the game. However, in the bottom of the sixth, pitcher Cooper Garrison allowed Razorbacks designated hitter Kuhio Aloy to get a two run blast to center field, which blew open the game to give the Hogs a three-run lead. Garrison was relieved by

Colin Maloney, who was in turn relieved by Jack Nelson after giving up nothing but walks and loading the bases. Nelson proceeded to walk another batter and allow a run in the process, making the lead 7-3. Nelson ended the inning by striking out Hogs shortstop Wehiwa Aloy, but the damage was done. The Red Wolves would not recover from this innings damage.

Turner was credited with the loss, moving his record to 1-4 on the season. Razorbacks pitcher Dylan Carter got the win in his relief efforts, moving his record to 4-0. The Red Wolves drop to 14-18 on the season with the loss. A-State will return to Jonesboro to take on the South Alabama Jaguars in a weekend series, starting on April 11.

What's Next:

Opponent: South Alabama Jaguars

First Pitch: Friday, 6 p.m.

Where: Tomlinson Stadium, Jonesboro

Tune in: ESPN+