

Howland leaves Pitt for UCLA

By Beth Harris
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Ben Howland knows he will never be another John Wooden. He still wants to try.

Howland took over as UCLA coach Thursday, leaving behind a Pittsburgh program he took to national prominence for a chance to lead the Bruins, whom he idolized growing up in Santa Barbara.

"It's so exciting," he said. "It's a dream I've realized."

The 45-year-old Howland becomes the eighth coach at UCLA since Wooden retired in 1975 after leading the Bruins to 10 NCAA championships in a 12-year span.

UCLA has won only one title since Wooden retired, under Jim Harrick in 1995.

"I really embrace and revel in the history and tradition of this program," Howland said. "John Wooden and UCLA basketball are synonymous. He's the greatest, not only because of the national championships he helped win, but equally importantly, the way he conducted the program in such class and dignity."

Howland signed a seven-year contract with a base guarantee of \$900,000-plus per year. It includes bonuses for graduation rate, being selected national coach of the year, reaching the Final Four and winning national and Pac-10 Conference titles that could push his salary over \$1 million.

UCLA athletic director Dan Guerrero said Howland and the university will jointly pay a \$750,000 buyout of his Pitt contract.

"The bottom line is we got our man," Guerrero said. "We expect big things from this hire, and no more than what Ben expects."

Howland will try to rebuild the battered Bruins, just as he led Pitt from Big East doormat to national championship contender in four years.

"We have a lot of work to do," he said. "This is not an overnight project."

Howland has a 168-99 record in nine years as a head coach — five at Northern Arizona and four at Pitt. The Panthers reached the final 16 of the NCAA tournament the last two years.

He will run a UCLA program coming off its first losing season in 55 years. Steve Lavin was fired March 17 after the Bruins went 10-19, ending their string of 14 consecutive NCAA tournament appearances.

"I don't know a lot about them as players or as kids yet," said Howland, who met with his new team for 30 minutes Thursday. "It's a clean slate for everyone in the program."

"I knew right away what I wanted to do, which was to pursue this opportunity."

— Ben Howland
UCLA head basketball coach

Howland planned to fly to the Final Four in New Orleans with his 15-year-old son later Thursday, then go to Pittsburgh on Sunday to meet with his former players before flying to Los Angeles on Monday to meet individually with the Bruins.

"I saw the eyes of the players. They were sitting on the edges of their seats and they were all making eye contact," Guerrero said. "To a person, I would say they all bought in."

Howland can begin recruiting next Tuesday; however, all 13 of UCLA's scholarships are committed for next season.

"The No. 1 thing in recruiting is players in your own area. There's not a more fertile ground for players than right here in Southern California," he said. "We've got to get back doing a great job of evaluating and attracting that talent."

Howland said he would meet with the 92-year-old Wooden at the Final Four.

Equestrian

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Unfortunately for the Aggies, that leaves the team out in the cold, but on an individual level, there are as many as six women still vying for a chance to compete at nationals in the individual competitions held at the same time as team competition.

The Aggies are heading to New Mexico hoping for a little help from Assistant Coach Pamela Bruemmer, as she is familiar with New Mexico State and many of the horses that the women will be riding.

"We have a little home team advantage because I'm familiar with some of those horses," Bruemmer said. "I know the facility and some of the training they have had so hopefully the girls will have a bit of an edge with my education on what they will be facing."

The edge comes from the fact that the women are not allowed to meet the horse before they ride it. The women are given a horse at random and are left to direct it to the best of their abilities. The situation is made more difficult in that the women are not allowed to know their pattern before the day of the meet. This puts mental and physical pressure on the rider.

"There's a ton of work going on. They have to have the horses figure out what their legs are doing, and their hands are telling them something else and so many other things, and it has to be seamless," Bruemmer said.

The competition starts at 9 a.m. on Saturday in Las Cruces.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Aggies open outdoor season

The national champion Texas A&M archery team returns to action Saturday to compete in the Lone Star FITA in Austin. This will be the first tournament of the outdoor season for the Aggie archers.

Last month A&M captured its third consecutive National Archery Association indoor championship. Senior Dawn Chuddy also won the second indoor national title of her career.

The tournament is split into two days of action. The first day, called a FITA round, consists of each archer shooting 144 arrows, after which officials tabulate scores and arrange a bracket for tournament play on the second day.

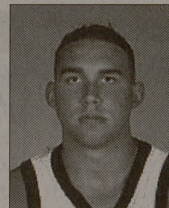
Hosted by the University of Texas club team, the Lone Star FITA normally attracts individual and unattached archers from around Texas.

The FITA round of the Lone Star tournament begins Saturday at the University of Texas Intramural Fields. Head-to-head competition will take place on Sunday.

Junior center leaving A&M

Junior center Nolan Butterfrass will transfer from the Texas A&M basketball team to another program, A&M Head Coach Melvin Watkins announced on Thursday.

The 6'10" Butterfrass played in 17 games this season and averaged 1.1 points and 0.8 rebounds per game.



BUTTERFRASS

Ivey, Texas ready for Final Four

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Royal Ivey took a long time to think about who might be able to stop his teammate, star guard T.J. Ford of Texas.

Only one person came to mind. "I do it in practice every day," Ivey says with a smile, drawing a big laugh from Ford and a room full of reporters.

"That's my teammate," Ivey said. "I know all his moves."

And who's to argue? Texas coach Rick Barnes doesn't open his practices to the media, so only the Longhorns know what goes on behind closed doors.

Ivey's play in games is no secret. He's the Longhorns best perimeter defender, picking up much of his footwork from his days as a dancer in school.

Texas counts on him to shut down an opponent's best scorer, both on the court and in his

head. He's the team's best trash talker, the guy who nicknamed Ford "Rat."

"When Royal gets in somebody's head," Thomas said. "it's lights out."

Making his first appearance in the Final Four since 1947, Texas (26-6) plays Syracuse (28-5) Saturday night in the semifinals. Of course, Ivey's assignment won't be to guard the 5-foot-10 Ford, but to get a handle on Syracuse's 6-8 freshman forward Carmelo Anthony. Ivey is 6-3.

"He is a tough matchup," Barnes said. "Roy would be the guy that would start on him."

Ivey credits his development as a defender to his time dancing in school in Queens, N.Y. His danced his way into the into a magnet high school where he took courses in ballet and hip-hop.

"Defense is about coordina-

tion and timing," Ivey said. "Dancing helps with those."

Ivey started 26 games at point guard as a freshman at Texas before Ford arrived. He earned his reputation as defensive stopper when he shut down former Stanford All-American Casey Jacobson in a Texas win in 2001.

Ivey held Jacobson to nine points on 3-for-17 shooting, jawing at him the whole game.

"I let him know I was going to be with him all day. He kind of smiled at me like 'Man, you can't guard me.' Then the ball went up and I shut him down," Ivey said.

His verbal jabs are subtle, under-the-breath braggadocio meant solely for the ears of the intended target. He won't say what say exactly what message he'll have for Anthony.

"I can't give out my lines," he said.

CLASSIFIED



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