

Give Tubby Smith a lifetime contract

Written by Fred Easter
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Nobody asked me, but, I feel kinda sorry for Gopher Basketball Coach, Tubby Smith.

Tubby, not unlike other Black men who are “in charge” of something, is way under appreciated. And now, some sportswriters are suggesting that folk at the U are thinking about their next coach.

Tubby has been snake bitten by injuries, defections and off the court issues. I've always felt that when players are transferring out, it speaks to a coach's ability to establish a set of rules and stick to them. No prima donnas. No one player more important than the team or the program. Point guard Al Nolan went down last year and left us without someone to run the offense and provide tough on ball defense to the opponents' point. This also had the effect of greatly diminishing the effectiveness of Blake Hoffarber a fine shooter, who was pressed into service at the point. Also, Royce White, a fine forward, got embroiled in legal issues and left for Iowa State. This excellent recruit never played in a UM uniform. Earlier, Davoe Joseph left for Oregon. Power forward Trevor Mbakwe lost part of last season to legal issues, as well. This year, Trevor, now the conference rebounding leader, blew out his knee just before the 2012 conference schedule began. Big Mo Williams has been hurt since last year. Colton Iverson left after last year.

What is impressive through all of this is that Tubby has his team playing tough defense even through a losing season. This is more than you can say for the likes of Michael Beasley and Kevin Love of the Wolves.

What is even more impressive, and significant, is that an NBA coach and an NBA Hall of Famer have sent their sons to Tubby. These have to be termed “intelligent and well-informed choices”. I'm guessing Lionel Hollins and Ralph Sampson Jr. expect high level, first class coaching instruction and clean programs. That's what they are getting. It is also significant that they were not deterred by the fact that their sons would play in the oldest basketball facility on earth.

I think it's interesting that the U has a new football stadium and fairly new, impressive hockey and baseball venues. Not only is “The Barn” a pitiful 21st century basketball venue; there isn't even a big time practice facility with which to lure McDonalds All America High School players whose Fathers, or Mothers can't bully into making the best, long term choice.

If President Eric Kaler and/or the next athletics director have any sense, they'll give Tubby a practice facility and a lifetime contract.