

Katie Smith Relieved Of Coaching Duties With New York Liberty



Legendary former Ohio State women's basketball player Katie Smith will not have her contract renewed to coach the WNBA New York Liberty, per a release from the team.

"On behalf of the entire Liberty organization, we want to thank Katie for her time with our franchise," said general manager Jonathan Kolb. "These decisions are never easy to make, but we felt it necessary to move our organization forward in a new direction. We wish her all the best."

Smith, who had played for the Liberty and joined the staff as an assistant in 2013, was hired as the head coach in 2017.

The team struggled with an overall lack of talent and attendance issues during her two year tenure, putting up a 17-51 two year record. With a new owner and GM put in place recently, the writing seemed to be on the wall that Smith would be included in the churn prior to a full rebuild.

Smith was able to manufacture a three game improvement from year one to year two, going 10-24 in 2019 after a 7-27 season in 2018, but that change wasn't enough to earn the former Buckeye an extension on her two year contract.

Smith will likely resurface in the WNBA as an assistant, perhaps under Las Vegas Aces head coach Bill Laimbeer, who hired Katie in New York, before departing for his current job two years ago.

A Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame inductee as of 2018, Smith is largely considered one of the greatest athletes to ever come through Ohio State, and a true pioneer of women's basketball. She averaged 20.8 points per game over her four years at Ohio State from 1992 to 1996, setting records along the way and leading the Buckeyes to the NCAA title game as a freshman.

Smith was a member of the 1999 WNBA expansion draft, when she was allocated to the Minnesota

Lynx, where she played for six years, before being traded to the Detroit Shock in 2006. After winning an title with the Shock in 2008, Smith signed with the Washington Mystics in 2010, was traded to Seattle in 2011, and ultimately finished her career in New York.