

Ohio State Hiring NC State Assistant Joel Justus As Associate Head Coach



Ohio State head coach Jake Diebler added another key piece to his coaching staff on Monday, hiring former NC State assistant Joel Justus as his associate head coach. Justus, 42, is fresh off helping the Wolfpack win the ACC Tournament as a No. 10 seed and make the Final Four as a No. 11 seed, the program's first appearance in the round since 1983.

"Joel is someone I have known for a while and I'm excited to have him join our staff," Diebler said in a release. "He is a well-rounded coach with great experience in the development and recruiting spaces, while winning everywhere he's been. His vision for building a program and developing a winning culture is something I was looking for and I can't wait for him to get started."

Justus enters Columbus with 14 years of collegiate coaching experience under his belt, including the last two seasons spent under Kevin Keatts' staff at NC State. Prior to his time with the Wolfpack, Justus spent one season as an assistant for Bobby Hurley at Arizona State, where he helped develop former Ohio State players Alonzo Gafney and Luther Muhammad.

Justus' longest coaching stint occurred at Kentucky, where he spent seven seasons coaching under longtime head coach John Calipari — who, according to multiple reports Sunday night — is in line to become head coach at Arkansas. He served as an assistant for Calipari from 2016-2021 and also held roles as a special assistant to the head coach in 2015-16 and director of analytics in 2014-15.

During that span, Justus helped mold future NBA first-round draft picks and All-Stars Bam Adebayo, Devin Booker, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, De'Aaron Fox, Jamal Murray and Karl Anthony-Towns, among others, and was named a top rising star in coaching by both the Athletic and ESPN.

Justus, who also was a high school head coach at Davidson Day (N.C.) and Woodberry Forest (Va.), started his collegiate coaching career at Elon from 2004-08, helping lead the Pheonix to a Northern Division title in 2006.

Justus, like Diebler, is also a former college basketball player, having played guard at UNC Wilmington from 2001-04. He started just 16 of his 116 games for the Seahawks but claimed two Colonial Athletic Association titles and was named team captain his senior season.

Justus marks the second addition to Diebler's staff this offseason, the first being former USC Upstate head coach Dave Dickerson, who rejoined the program in March after serving as an assistant on former Ohio State head coach Thad Matta's staff from 2010-17. Former assistants Brandon Bailey and Jack Owens both left the program to join former Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann's staff at Depaul, but Mike Netti is — at least for now — the only assistant from the 2023-24 season to remain on Diebler's staff.

Director of professional development Terence Dials and special assistant to the head coach Nick Kellogg also served in coaching roles once Diebler assumed head coaching duties, though it was not clear whether or not the plan is to have them on staff next season.