

Darsch No Stranger To Post-Season Play

By Dave Kelch

For seven years at Tennessee, new Ohio State women's basketball coach Nancy Darsch stood in the shadows as the assistant coach to Pat Head Summitt.

When Darsch, 33, was named as Tara Van Derveer's successor June 12, the clouds that cast that shadow lifted forever. One who is most happy to see Darsch receive the promotion, yet the person who most suffers from it, is Summitt.

"During the past seven years together, Nancy and I have enjoyed five appearances in the Final Four in women's basketball and a gold medal at the Olympics in Los Angeles (1984)," said Summitt. "Nancy has been an active bench coach in two national championship games, as well as the Olympics. She is a great analyst and an excellent coach."

During the Summitt-Darsch years at Tennessee, the Vols compiled a record of 180-58. Tennessee reached the final of the '84 NCAA women's tournament, losing to Cheryl Miller-led Southern Cal. This year, Tennessee lost to Mississippi in the Mideast Regional final.

Darsch, from Plymouth, Mass., earned a bachelor's degree from Springfield (Mass.) College in 1973 and a master's degree from Tennessee in 1979. Her first year at Tennessee ('78-'79), Darsch served as a graduate assistant coach.

Darsch was an assistant coach for the 1980 and '84 Olympic teams and for the 1979 and '83 Pan-American Games. She coached basketball, field hockey and

softball at Longmeadow High in Longmeadow, Mass., from 1973 until her appointment at Tennessee.

"One of Nancy's strongest qualities is her ability to teach," said Summitt. "She is truly outstanding in this area and has greatly complimented our team in being able to teach the finer points of the game and help us develop fundamentally into our team concept."

Darsch takes over a Buckeye team which advanced to the NCAA East Regional final this year, losing by three points to eventual national champion Old Dominion.

Ohio State won four consecutive Big Ten titles under Van Derveer, who left OSU to take the head coaching duties at Stanford. The Buckeyes finished the '84-'85 regular season ranked seventh in the nation, were 18-0 in conference play and 28-3 overall.

"I am, of course, very pleased to become the new head women's coach at Ohio State," said Darsch. "We will continue the type of success and dedication Ohio State has had all along. It's (success) here to stay."

OSU Athletic Director Rick Bay said that Darsch was Ohio State's first choice and the only candidate offered the position.

"We were committed to finding someone with a national reputation," Bay said. "She has been exposed to, and coached, every great women's basketball player in the country in the past five years."

"I am very excited at having



New OSU Women's Cage Coach Nancy Darsch

Nancy as our new coach. Her qualifications were unique and I am confident she will continue the strong tradition established for Ohio State women's basketball."

Since the announcement, Darsch has been on a whirlwind tour of summer basketball camps and tournaments with the all-important job requirement — recruiting — on her mind.

Although the OSU recruiting class for this fall is complete (there are four signees and a fifth is available, but Darsch said she will leave it unfilled), Darsch has been on the road eyeing talent for her first OSU recruiting class next year.

"I wanted to get on the road as soon as possible," said Darsch, who is working the Tennessee summer camp this week in Knoxville. "I think everyone is looking to see what's going to happen in the Big Ten," since Ohio State has dominated and only a few of the schools appear to be financially committed to women's basketball.

Van Derveer took assistant coach Amy Tucker with her to the west coast. Luby Lichonczak, who has been with Van Derveer all seven of Van Derveer's head-coaching years, turned down an offer to stay with her, to pursue the OSU post.

He is now looking into other head coach possibilities.

Darsch has named one assistant, former Buckeye player Kathy Gordon. Her second assistant is expected to be named soon.

Gordon was a three-time letter winner for OSU from 1975 through '77. Ohio State was 61-17 during that span and won Big Ten tournament titles in '76 and '77 and

AIAW state championships from '75 through '77.

"My priority was to put together a staff that philosophically would give us a good working base," said Darsch. "Kathy fits that description. Her experiences at Ohio State and at Purdue (where she was an assistant coach) put her in a situation to contribute greatly to the program. I wanted an assistant with a background in recruiting in this area and Kathy has that."

Darsch says no major changes are planned for the program. The same running-style offense and tough defense played under Van Derveer will be continued, although with changes to best use personnel.

Darsch will have returning starters Tracey Hall, Francine Lewis, Jodi Roth and Liana Coutts to build upon. Lewis and Hall were all-Big Ten and Hall was the Freshman of the Year. Other strong returnees include Toni Roesch, Rhonda Winters and Barb Smith. Gone is all-Big Ten guard Yvette Angel, starting center Carla Chapman (whose season was ended midway through the Big Ten slate by a knee injury), Theresa Busch and Kristin Watt.

The incoming freshman class includes *Parade Magazine* and *Street and Smith* All-American Nikita Lowry from Cass Tech High in Detroit, Mich., Ohio Class AAA and AA players of the year Geneva Sanford and Lisa Cline and AAA all-Ohioan Jennifer Johnson.

The freshman class is small in stature but big on talent.

"I like what I've seen," said Darsch. "They're not tall but have a lot of talent. They're all good athletes. I'm very happy with our recruits."

DON'T WAIT
FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION
TO ENJOY
COUNTRY EUROPEAN
DINING
AT MODERATE PRICES
DISCOVER
PEASANT ON THE LANE

Peasant
on the
Lane

Reservations suggested: 481-8189
Located in the Lane Avenue Shopping Center
American Express.
VISA or MasterCard accepted.

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

**FREE
SAMPLE**

Subscribe Today!

Vol. 12, No. 25

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

April 17, 1993

Buckeyes Become First Big Ten Team To Play For Championship

OSU Finishes Runner-Up For National Title

By MIKE WACHSMAN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Even though the ring will be silver instead of gold, the Ohio State women's basketball team had a monumental 1992-93 campaign.

In addition to tying archrival Iowa for the Big Ten title, being the first Big Ten team to ever make the NCAA Tournament's championship game, and finishing second nationally in attendance, the Lady Buckeyes fell just two points short of winning it all against Texas Tech, losing 84-82.

That narrow defeat, though, cannot erase the memories of the best season in Ohio State women's basketball history.

"I'm very proud of our players, not only today, but for the whole season with what they've accomplished," OSU head coach Nancy Darsch said after the national championship game. "It's been a great ride for us. It's kind of unbelievable."

Unbelievable in light of the fact that very few pundits expected much from basically the same team that posted a mediocre 15-13 record just one year ago.

But what many didn't see was that OSU won six of its last eight games last season and brought in what many called the top recruiting class in the country.

Included in that group was national freshman of the year Katie Smith, who also became just the fifth freshman to make the Kodak All-American team, as well as major contributors Lisa Negri and Adrienne Johnson.

The fact that no one gave Ohio State even a second look was evident in the preseason national rankings. The Lady Buckeyes were nowhere to be found.

So with the pressure off, the Buckeyes went on a roll, opening the season with a 76-65 win over state rival Bowling Green and winning their own Buckeye Classic for the first time since 1989 by beating Georgia 89-72. The Bulldogs were ranked 20th in the nation at the time, giving OSU fans a little preview of what was about to unfold.

Ohio State jumped back onto the national map for the first time in several years with a win over national power Virginia in the ACC-Big Ten Challenge, a game in which Smith showed just how talented she was by scoring 35 points. It was the high point in the early part of the season, when the Lady Bucks won their first eight contests.

"Part of the reason we've been able to accomplish this much is maybe we didn't have the expectations on us and there wasn't that pressure," Darsch



Katie Smith (30) and Averrill Roberts (22) were two of the many stars for the Ohio State women's basketball team this season. Smith, the national freshman of the year, totaled 39 points and 16 rebounds in the Final Four, while Roberts, a four-year starter for the Lady Buckeyes, scored 29 points and also grabbed 11 steals as OSU finished as the national champion runners-up.

OSU Football Team In Midst Of Spring Practice

Ohio State began a sixth spring football practice under head coach John Cooper on March 31, kicking off a session of drills that would continue until the annual Scarlet and Gray Game, set for April 24 at 1:30 p.m. in Ohio Stadium.

Cooper turned out to be the first casualty of spring ball. He underwent back surgery for the third time since 1990, undergoing a procedure to remove a ruptured disk

on April 2. The one-hour surgery went well and the OSU head coach returned to observe practice a few days later.

As the Buckeyes assembled for spring ball, the team began its search for replacements of departed starters from a year ago, including quarterback Kirk Herbstreit, tailback Robert Smith, center Paul Long, split end Brian Stablein, nose guard Greg Smith, strong safety

Roger Harper and middle line-backer Steve Tovar.

Bob Hoying took the lead over Bret Powers in the QB sweepstakes, while several other players tried to position themselves for starting jobs by the time OSU takes on Rice in the 1993 season opener.

BSB covers spring football, position by position, in this issue with stories beginning on page 3 and continuing on pages 6-19.

Continued On Page 22

OSU Earned Respect Through Tough Wins

Continued From Page 1

said. "We truly did have fun this year. This has been a very special team in many ways."

OSU lost by three points on a shot with 13 seconds remaining at number one-ranked Vanderbilt five days after beating Virginia, opening eyes as to how strong the team really was. In fact, the Buckeyes, who had long since before entered the national rankings, even moved up three places in the poll despite the loss.

OSU rebounded well from the defeat,

winning its first five Big Ten games, including a road win over then-number 12 Purdue, before stumbling 97-80 at Penn State after holding a one-point halftime lead.

There was a struggle with Wisconsin two days later followed by a loss at Iowa. With the Lady Buckeyes in somewhat of a slump, things seemed as if they might go south.

However, the good ship Buckeye was righted and sailed home with 10 straight regular-season wins, including home victories over the Nittany Lions and the Hawkeyes, the latter before a

sellout crowd of 13,276. Penn State had handed Iowa its first Big Ten loss just a few days before the Hawkeyes had to come to St. John Arena, and OSU's win over Iowa was instrumental in giving the Buckeyes a tie for the Big Ten crown.

After finishing the regular season with road wins over Northwestern and Illinois to go 16-2 in league play, OSU received the number one seed in the East region of the NCAA Tournament, getting a first-round bye and beating Rutgers 91-60 in a second-round game before a St. John Arena crowd of 12,000, bringing the season average to 6,146 fans per game.

The games got tougher as the tournament progressed, but Ohio State weathered every storm, handling Western Kentucky 86-73 after trailing at intermission and edging Virginia 75-73 in a rematch that nearly everyone had the Cavaliers exacting their revenge for the loss in January.

Then came a third match-up with Iowa in the Final Four, and the Buckeyes needed overtime before vanquishing the feisty Hawkeyes 73-72. Averill Roberts paced the Buckeyes with 16 points, her best-ever showing against Iowa.

The win over Iowa set up the national championship game with Texas Tech, which ended in a two-point loss. Again, the Buckeyes weren't given much of a chance, but they hung with the Raiders throughout the game despite a tournament-record 47 points from Tech's Sheryl Swoopes, the national college player of the year.

Despite the loss in the title game, Darsch pointed out — and quite correctly — that this was a special season for many reasons, most notably the coming together of the senior class.

The seniors, after making the tournament as freshmen with a 17-11 campaign, suffered through an 11-17 season the next year and were headed nowhere fast. But they finished their tenures in the fast lane.

Forward Nikki Keyton, who ended her career with 1,200 points (11th best

in school annals) and 633 rebounds (tied for eighth with Carla Chapman) was unhappy to lose when all the marbles were up for grabs, but she knows there will always be a special place in her heart for the team and the 1992-93 season.

"You don't work so hard to make it to the championship game and then lose," Keyton said. "That wasn't our plan. So in that sense, it's a little disheartening. At the same time, no one can be disappointed because we had an outstanding season and exceeded all of our goals."

By bursting onto the national scene in a big way, there may be more good times ahead for the women's program.

At least that's what point guard Audrey Burcy, who tallied 639 points and 168 steals (sixth all-time), hopes will happen.

She feels that the appearance of the Buckeyes in the title game sent a message to preppers that you can achieve in a big way at OSU.

"We hope this helps to show how good Ohio State is," she said. "Hopefully, it will help in getting good quality players to want to come here and become Buckeyes and carry on what we started."

The Lady Bucks began the season unrespected and unranked, but that didn't stop team members from believing in themselves.

Once the team showed it could beat the Virginias, Penn States and Iowas of the world, there was no reason to think it couldn't reach the pinnacle.

Guard Averill Roberts, who finished second in school history to Tracey Hall in both scoring (1,818) and steals (273), felt the Buckeyes had the necessary moxie to have a good season.

But she also admitted it wasn't until late in the year that she really felt OSU could advance deep into the tournament.

"I really didn't think about making the championship game until we got into the season," she said. "Once we started on a roll and beat some big teams, that's when I really believed we

COLUMBUS Unforgettables VOL. I, II, III . . .



. . . make great gifts

Purchase this best selling trio of limited editions of Columbus Yesterdays and Todays now featured at ALL COLUMBUS BOOKSTORES

Call Bob Thomas, the editor, at 444-3010 to arrange to have your volumes custom signed

Business Equipment Inc.

USED OFFICE FURNITURE SPECIALISTS

IN STOCK FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY

NEW & USED FROM THE LEADING MANUFACTURERS

- DESKS
- FILING CABINETS
- CHAIRS
- PARTITIONS
- COMPUTER STANDS
- BOOKCASES
- CONFERENCE TABLES

We Buy, Sell & Rent Used Furniture

Office Quality Machines
Backed by Quality Service

Suppliers to: Business & Government
Typewriters • Word Processors • Calculators



Call or Stop in For Quotes Call For Free Office Demonstration

MON-FRI 8:30 - 5 SAT. 9:00 - 12:00
288 E. LONG ST. (between 4th & Grant)

224-0144

FOR YOU...
FOR YOUR BODY
FOR YOUR MIND...



Aerobics
Lifecycles
Basketball

Cybex Machines
Free Weights



Stairmasters
Lifesteps
Track



846-8400

In the Continent
Rt. 161 and Busch Blvd.



Whirlpool
Sauna
Steamroom
Lounge



Swimming
Tennis
Racquetball

Mention this ad
for a
FREE WORKOUT

Final 1992-93 OSU Women's Basketball Statistics - Record: 28-4, Big Ten 16-2

	GP-GS	MIN-AV	FGM	FGA	PCT.	3GM	3GA	PCT.	FTM	FTA	PCT.	OR	DR	RB	AVG	HI	PF-DQ	AST	TO	BS	ST	PTS	AVG	HI
30 Katie Smith	32-32	949-30	189	375	.504	36	80	.450	164	203	.808	82	104	186	5.8	11	70-2	104	70	2	59	578	18.1	35
22 Averill Roberts	32-32	980-31	187	415	.451	39	113	.345	81	119	.681	81	64	145	4.5	9	78-0	96	93	4	98	494	15.4	29
50 Nikki Keyton	31-30	846-27	171	306	.559	11	40	.275	110	138	.797	56	131	187	6.0	13	85-1	40	72	6	34	463	14.9	21
15 Audrey Burcy	32-32	780-24	117	248	.472	32	93	.344	92	129	.713	38	73	111	3.5	9	67-0	123	91	0	95	358	11.2	20
43 Stacie Howard	32-30	650-20	101	182	.555	0	0	.000	42	66	.636	43	52	95	3.0	8	76-1	17	41	18	27	244	7.6	16
44 Lisa Negri	32-4	672-21	47	111	.423	3	16	.188	50	68	.735	68	92	160	5.0	10	63-3	23	38	21	13	147	4.6	12
31 Adrienne Johnson	30-0	380-13	58	147	.395	2	10	.200	14	23	.609	29	20	49	1.6	5	41-0	25	28	2	16	132	4.4	13
10 Alysiah Bond	26-0	239-9	25	68	.368	6	24	.250	14	26	.538	11	17	28	1.1	3	27-0	35	42	0	24	70	2.7	9
25 Erin Ingwersen	30-0	336-11	19	62	.306	11	38	.289	18	26	.692	17	26	43	1.4	5	23-0	15	20	1	4	67	2.2	10
55 Kelly Fergus	27-0	213-8	16	46	.348	0	0	.000	14	23	.609	13	38	51	1.9	6	23-0	4	16	6	5	46	1.7	7
24 Lisa Sebastian	32-0	284-9	21	68	.309	0	7	.000	6	9	.667	7	23	30	0.9	5	27-0	36	25	0	20	48	1.5	8
23 GiGi Jackson	18-0	96-5	6	15	.400	0	0	.000	3	8	.375	4	19	23	1.3	4	13-0	5	7	1	8	15	0.8	4
Team														107						3				
OSU Totals	32	6425	957	2043	.468	140	421	.333	608	838	.726	449	659	1215	38.0	51	593	523	546	61	403	2662	83.2	104
OPP Totals	32	6425	836	1914	.437	101	287	.352	405	590	.686	443	712	1155	36.1	47	712	433	774	54	235	2178	68.1	97

could make it this far. I knew there was Final Four material on this team."

Point guard Lisa Sebastian, who scored 108 points in her career, took the loss hard, saying fans remember only who won, not who the winner defeated.

"When you make it to the national championship game, you think, 'I've come this far, I don't want to lose now,'" she said. "This was not good enough. No one really cares who came in second. But we got beat by a great Texas Tech team and I give them all the credit."

"We can't really hang our heads, though. We had a great season, and when we look back in a week or so, we'll realize just how much we accomplished. We did something no Ohio State team ever did. It might seem like one loss lessens the season, but really it doesn't."

Buckeye fans will agree with Sebastian, remembering this team as the one that put Ohio State back on the women's basketball map.

While Smith had a fabulous freshman season, the seniors were the heart and soul of the squad, and don't think Darsch doesn't realize that.

"Our seniors did a great job this season," she said. "They took it upon themselves in the last few games to win."

Their efforts the last portion of the season are what championship teams are made of. They'll be hard to replace."

With the loss of the seniors, it will also be difficult to repeat as Big Ten champions, but Ohio State should again be in the thick of things next year, along with Purdue, Penn State and Iowa.

The Buckeyes return nine players, plus center Lavona Turner, who sat out the season with a knee injury suffered early in preseason practice. There are also three highly touted recruits entering the fold, so Ohio State should remain competitive, at least for the near future.

Keyton doesn't see any reason why the success should start and end with this season, and paints a rosy picture for the seasons to come.

"The freshmen will be able to build on what we started," she said. "They did a good job this year and there's no reason to think they won't improve next year. I don't see why they couldn't get back to the Final Four again next season."

Free Throws

The final Plank's Lady Buckeye of the Month for March (and a little bit of April) is senior Audrey Burcy, who

averaged 15.4 points and 5.3 rebounds in the final four regular-season games and the NCAA Tournament.

Burcy hit 20 points in back-to-back tournament contests against Virginia and Western Kentucky and had a pair of crucial three-pointers in the overtime win against Iowa in the national semi-final game.

YOU CAN scratch one prospective recruit off Ohio State's list.

Buffalo Hutch-Tech's LaToya Crumpton, a 6-0 forward and all-state selection after averaging close to 30 points per game, chose league rival Penn State over the Buckeyes and will sign in the spring period, which begins April 14 and runs through May 15.

OSU may still sign one more player in the spring signing period. BSB will update Ohio State and Big Ten recruiting in the coming weeks.

Plank's Cafe



Audrey Burcy

**PLANK'S LADY BUCK
OF THE MONTH
FOR MARCH**

Get The Latest Updates On OSU Sports!

**BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN
HOTLINE**

1-900-896-0666

24-Hour Service

Daily updates on all Ohio State sports
including football, basketball and
recruiting information

Calls may be made from any telephone (24-Hour Service)
The charge is \$2 for the first minute, \$1 each additional minute
Messages updated daily at 12 noon EST

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

\$2.00

PERIODICAL NEWSPAPER
CLASSIFICATION
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH!!

Vol. 16, No. 23

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

March 15, 1997

The End Of The Line

Geiger Cleans House, Fires Ayers, Darsch

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

It will go down in the annals of Ohio State University athletic history as "Black Monday."

In an unprecedented move, OSU athletic director Andy Geiger fired both men's basketball coach Randy Ayers and women's coach Nancy Darsch on the same day, March 10, ending rampant speculation about both coaches' future at the school.

"I thought it was the right thing to do rather than one today and one next week," Geiger said of the double firing at a hastily called St. John Arena news conference. "Let's have one bad day and do it all at once."

Ayers was dismissed after eight years at the helm and 14 overall at OSU, while Darsch spent 12 years as the Buckeyes' head coach.

According to Geiger, he established firm criteria with both coaches after last season. He challenged both programs to finish in the upper half of the Big Ten. Neither did.

Ayers was fired after a second consecutive 10-17 season and a ninth-place Big Ten finish, while Darsch's team went 12-16 and finished a school-worst 10th in the conference.

"It is my feeling we did not meet the goals that we set before the season began, which were upper half of the conference goals," Geiger said. "There has been some improvement, particularly in the men's program, but we simply didn't meet the goals and I think it's time for us to move on and move forward with an aggressive search and a new look for our basketball programs."

In the days leading up to the decision, it became clear both coaches would be fired. In fact, OSU president Gordon Gee, a staunch Ayers supporter in the past, issued a terse statement paving the way for the move on March 9.

"We have had four very tough seasons," Gee said. "This is the longest losing streak in the history of this university. Ohio State, for years, has set the standard in both men's and women's basketball. We're not now."

A day later, it was official, although Geiger refused to say when he decided

• Players visit Geiger, react to Ayers' firing (Page 11)

• A look at 15 possible candidates for the men's coaching post (Page 12)

• A timeline of Ayers' tenure at Ohio State (Page 12)

• Darsch stands behind her accomplishments with Buckeyes (Pages 14-15)

to fire both coaches. He notified them in separate meetings earlier in the day and also met with both teams.

"It was clear in the last few weeks of both seasons that we were not going to meet the goals and we had to consider what we were going to do next," he said.

Both programs have been national contenders under these two coaches. Ayers guided OSU with All-American Jimmy Jackson to a pair of Big Ten titles in 1991 and '92 and was the national coach of the year in '91. Darsch, with All-American Katie Smith as the star player, helped OSU advance to the 1993 NCAA championship game.

But both programs have fallen on hard times in recent years. The men's program was decimated by a two-year NCAA investigation into the recruitment of Cincinnati prep star Damon Flint and a spate of off-the-court problems that caused the entire five-man 1992 recruiting class to leave the school.

Since Darsch led OSU to that NCAA title game, the Buckeyes have made just one NCAA appearance in the last four years (For more on Darsch, see story on pages 14-15).

"I think our programs need to be perceived as national contenders," Geiger said. "That's what it takes to elevate the programs."

Ayers was unavailable for comment, although he did issue a statement.

"I have been very fortunate to head the Ohio State basketball program for the last eight years and to have been associated with The Ohio State University for the past 14 years," he



AYERS' LAST STAND — Ohio State men's basketball coach Randy Ayers signals during his team's season finale against Michigan March 9 at St. John Arena. The game, an 86-81 overtime loss to the Wolverines, was his last as the OSU coach.

This Is Last Weekly Issue Scheduled For Winter Season

This is the last weekly issue of *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* scheduled for the winter season.

BSB will return in two weeks with the first of four biweekly issues scheduled for the spring. The next issue, dated March 29, will be mailed on March 25. That issue will be BSB's spring football preview edition.

The following issue, dated April 12, will be devoted to the OSU offense. The April 26 issue will be devoted to the OSU defense. The May 10 issue will be the spring wrap-up.

Continued On Page 10

COVER STORY: THE END OF THE LINE

Geiger Will Head Search For New Coaches

Continued From Page 1

said.

On the surface, Ayers was two years into a rebuilding process with a core of five sophomore players. Apparently the rebuilding task wasn't being completed quickly enough for Geiger, but Ayers predicts success for the young nucleus he brought to the school.

"I have grown very fond of the players I have had over the last 14 years, especially this current group," he said. "I think they will be a special group in the years to come and I hope the university will continue to embrace them."

Ayers' entire team made a last-ditch attempt to save his job by meeting with Geiger one day after its season ended with a disappointing 86-81 loss to Michigan.

"The decision was pretty much made (by then)," Geiger said. "I was impressed with their presentation. They are fine young people and they're very fond of their coach. They were recruited by him, they know him, and they have strong feelings for him. We had a good give-and-take on the subject."

The timing of the decision — on the eve of the NCAA Tournament — was ironic: The OSU men's program hasn't made the Big Dance in five years.

"We are seeking leadership, a strong, aggressive program, a program that is announced in the (NCAA) brackets," Geiger said. "That's where the program has been. That's what we hope the standards are for Ohio State."

"I think we've stuck it out very well. We've stayed patient with both programs. We've gone from a (women's) Final Four appearance to 3-13 in the conference. We would like to do better."

Geiger said he had no timetable in which to make his decisions. He did say he would assemble an unnamed advisory panel to help him, but he would have the final say.

"It's not a race," he said. "It's a search and we want to get the best coaches we can get for our programs and do the best and most thorough job we can."

Attendance at OSU men's games has lagged significantly the past three seasons as the team posted a combined record of 26-56. And with fund-raising efforts imperative for the success of the \$93 million Schottenstein Center (slated to open in late 1998), it became apparent something needed to be done.



MEDIA ONSLAUGHT — OSU athletic director Andy Geiger answers questions following a hastily called press conference March 10 at St. John Arena. Approximately 50 members of the news media were on hand as Geiger announced his decision to fire OSU men's basketball coach Randy Ayers and women's coach Nancy Darsch.

Geiger refused to pinpoint the money matters as the reason for Ayers' firing, though.

"It doesn't matter, those kind of things," he said. "They were symptoms. The programs were not progressing at the rate I think they need to. That's what was behind it."

"There is always pressure and I don't think the pressure is any different because of the Schottenstein Center or St. John Arena or wherever we would

play," Ayers said.

Ayers was fired with two years remaining on his contract. Darsch had one year left on her deal. Geiger refused to comment on negotiations with each coach on their respective buyouts.

"That has not been completed yet," he said. "That process is ongoing. It would be inappropriate to discuss that now."

Who's Next

Speculation has been rampant for weeks regarding who would replace the two coaches. Geiger said in the press conference he has not discussed the jobs with anyone.

"(Stanford's) Mike Montgomery contacted me in November," Geiger said. "I've read that I've been contacting him regularly. I hired him at Stanford and he is a good friend of mine. He called me to ask what was happening with the Big Ten conference tournament."

"The other head coach I've talked to since that time is Bob Knight of Indiana. He called me regarding the same subject."

"I have not talked to any other coach of any other university casually or otherwise."

Geiger said OSU would be careful in dealing with coaches whose teams are still involved in NCAA Tournament play.

"We would probably contact the schools before we contact the coaches and we would be gentle about that because there is respect for the fact that their seasons are ongoing," he said.

The OSU AD bristled at the notion that the school must fill quotas for the job openings, looking at a black candidate or a woman.

"We hire people and we expect people to do a job," he said. "If we feel we have to make a change, we make a change."

Looking To Next Year

The OSU men's team stumbled to the finish line this year, dropping eight of its last nine games after Jermaine Tate and Sean Tucker were sidelined with health problems.

"I've enjoyed this team," Ayers said. "They've worked hard for me. I just think they're a player or two away from being a top team in the conference."

If he recovers from a heart ailment, Tate will join classmates Damon Stringer, Neshawn Coleman, Shaun Stonerook and Jason Singleton on next year's squad.

Stringer said that although the record was the same, he saw immense improvement in the team from a year ago.

"I would say it was a step forward," he said. "Last year, there were a number of ball games right after halftime that we weren't even in. We were just fighting to get into the game. This year, we were fighting to win the games at the end."

"We just have to be mentally tough and take care of the ball on offense."

The facts would bear out that analysis. Eight of OSU's 17 losses were by six points or less and just one was by more than 20 points. Last year, the Buckeyes lost nine games by more than 10 points.

"I think we were definitely a better team this year than we were last year," Coleman said. "We took care of the ball better, we're a year older. There were a lot of things we did capitalize on, but in close games we came up short. Hopefully those things will change next year."

Ayers' OSU Tenure

Here is a look at the eight-year record of OSU men's basketball coach Randy Ayers:



Randy Ayers

Year	All Games			Big Ten Games			Place	Postseason
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.		
1989-90	17	13	.567	10	8	.556	6th	NCAA Second Round
1990-91	27	4	.871	15	3	.833	1st (T)	NCAA Round Of 16
1991-92	26	6	.831	15	3	.833	1st	NCAA Round Of 8
1992-93	15	13	.536	8	10	.444	7th	NIT First Round
1993-94	13	16	.448	6	12	.333	8th (T)	
1994-95	6	22	.214	2	16	.111	10th	
1995-96	10	17	.370	3	15	.167	10th	
1996-97	10	17	.370	5	13	.385	9th	
Totals	124	108	.534	64	80	.444		

OHIO STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Darsch Stands Behind Her Record

Women's Coach Fired After OSU Finishes 10th

By MIKE WACHSMAN

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer



Nancy Darsch

Anthony Rothman.

The decision was made by athletic director Andy Geiger, who, in a sweeping gesture, changed the landscape of Ohio State basketball, also axing men's coach Randy Ayers in the process.

Nancy Darsch looked confident she'd be heading into next year, despite the problems her Ohio State women's team had this season. The Buckeyes finished 10th in the conference, a school worst, and went 3-13 in league play, 12-16 overall. It was the third losing Big Ten season in the last four years.

Still, Darsch appeared unfazed by talk of her ouster that circulated around Columbus. She prepared to recruit, get things ready for next year and take it from there. So to say she was genuinely surprised about being let go late on the afternoon of March 10 might be an understatement.

In interviews she never seemed ready to pack it in or like she believed her future at Ohio State was shaky. But it apparently was.

"I feel badly for the kids and the signees who have committed to this program," Darsch told WSYX-TV reporter

Darsch compiled a 12-year record of 234-125, leading Ohio State to seven NCAA Tournament appearances, including a runner-up finish in 1993, losing the title game to Texas Tech. Just one year removed from a tournament berth, Darsch is now removed from her position.

"We didn't have as many wins as we wanted and didn't finish in the top half of the Big Ten," Darsch said. "But I'm proud of the way I conducted myself and the way I represented the university on and off the court."

Ohio State had some rocky times under Darsch, who inherited a pre-eminent program from Tara VanDerveer when she left to take the reins at Stanford. Though there were some downs, the ups were much higher, culminating in a run at the national title in 1993 behind the nation's top recruiting class, including No. 1 player Katie Smith from Logan, Ohio.

Prior to being dismissed, Darsch seemed ready to prepare for next season, when four recruits join the squad. Ohioans Jamie Lewis and Megan McCabe were shaken by the news, as was Michigan native Heather Frank, a 6-4 center from Milan. None of the three wanted to comment and Kylee Bogott, a 6-4 center from Illinois, was unavailable for comment.

Just before her ouster, Darsch commented on the season just passed and seemed to take things in stride.

"Losing is never fun, but, in spite of it all, this team had good relationships and good communication," Darsch said. "It

Darsch's OSU Tenure

Here is a look at the 12-year record of OSU women's basketball coach Nancy Darsch:

Year	All Games			Big Ten Games			Postseason
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.	
1985-86	23	7	.767	16	2	.889	1st
1986-87	26	5	.839	17	1	.944	1st (T)
1987-88	25	5	.833	16	2	.889	2nd
1988-89	24	6	.800	16	2	.889	1st (T)
1989-90	18	12	.600	11	7	.611	4th (T)
1990-91	11	17	.392	8	10	.444	5th (T)
1991-92	15	13	.536	9	9	.500	5th
1992-93	28	4	.875	16	2	.889	1st (T)
1993-94	14	14	.500	7	11	.333	7th (T)
1994-95	17	13	.567	7	9	.438	7th (T)*
1995-96	21	13	.618	8	8	.500	6th (T)
1996-97	12	16	.429	3	13	.188	10th
Totals	234	125	.652	134	76	.638	

*Finished second in Big Ten tournament.

was pretty much low maintenance. We didn't have a lot of whining, inner conflicts, finger-pointing. It was pretty much a trouble-free team, probably the most I've had in 12 years. That also happened to be the worst Big Ten record we've had in 12 years, so I hope there's no correlation there.

"This team actually turned the corner as far as being able to be on the court every day and be together a lot of the time and not have other issues going on. There were some plays here and there that could have made a big difference in where we were, but that happens with every team."

Reaction From The Team

The degrees to which OSU players knew differed. Sophomore guard Roz Barker first heard the news from a television reporter, while junior center Tiffany Glosson already knew.

Glosson, Shelly Nichols and Talia

Goudy were all present when Geiger broke the news about Darsch, and all remained fairly emotionless about it.

However, Glosson was anything but unemotional when asked about her take on the developments.

"I'm kind of disappointed for it being my last year," Glosson said. "I don't want to have to understand a new coach and learn a different style. I'm comfortable with Nancy's coaching and her style. It's disappointing, but it's a part of life. And life goes on."

But not for Darsch, at least at Ohio State.

When addressing reasons for the dismissal, Geiger was candid.

"There were goals that needed to be met and they weren't," Geiger said. "That was in both programs."

After the Big Ten tournament, where Ohio State upset Penn State and nearly did the same to second-seed Michigan State, Darsch addressed some of the con-

FUNTRAIL
VAN & TRUCK
ACCESSORY STORE

262-5251

YOU BRING US YOUR TRUCK, VAN OR SPORT UTILITY...

TELL US WHAT YOU WANT

(A.R.E. TRUCK CAPS, REMOTE CAR STARTERS, ALARM SYSTEMS, CUSTOM & RUBBER CAR MATS)...

GIVE US A FEW DAYS... YOU'LL DRIVE YOUR DREAMS AWAY.

YOUR VAN & TRUCK ACCESSORY STORE

3966 INDIANOLA AVE. • COLUMBUS, OH 43214

Custom-Built High Performance Computers...

...For Your Business

- Custom PCs, Network Servers & Workstations
- Quality Upgrades & Replacements
- Professional Service

To speak with a Professional Systems Consultant call us today or visit us on the World Wide Web.

1.800.774.1981

<http://www.columbusmicro.com>
e-mail sales@columbusmicro.com



OHIO STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Ohio Girls Basketball Final Four Roundup

Here is a look at the Ohio girls high school basketball state playoffs, to be held at St. John Arena March 13-15:

Division I

Pickerington (26-0) vs. Wadsworth (24-1), March 14, 7 p.m.; Rocky River Magnificat (23-3) vs. Mason (23-2), March 14, 9 p.m. — Pickerington shoots for another state crown, led by Florida signee Tamara Stocks and spark plug LaToya Turner. Magnificat is its usual strong self defensively, holding teams to under 44 points per game.

Division II

Columbus Hartley (22-4) vs. Elida (24-1), March 14, 2 p.m.; Warren Vincent (21-4) vs. Beloit West Branch (25-1), March 14, 4 p.m. — Hartley is coached by former OSU star Toni Roesch and has the dangerous combo of Duke signee Georgia Schweitzer and Mandy White. The Hawks would have to be considered the longshots based on record, but they've been red-hot in

the playoffs.

Division III

Wauseon (25-0) vs. Utica (26-0), March 13, 7 p.m.; Chagrin Falls (25-1) vs. Casstown Miami East (23-2), March 13, 9 p.m. — Utica knocked off Oak Hill and OSU signee Jamie Lewis, playing a stifling zone and denying her penetration. Look for more of the same against a big Wauseon team. Miami East knocked off Buckeye signee Megan McCabe's Cincinnati Wyoming squad by a point, using patience to pull off the win.

Division IV

Kalida (24-1) vs. New Riegel (21-4), March 13, 2 p.m.; Berlin Hilland (24-2) vs. Fort Loramie (25-1), March 13, 4 p.m. — Fort Loramie is the real surprise here, knocking off Clark Southeastern in the regional finals, ending a 51-game winning streak by the Trojans.

— Mike Wachsman

cerns and problems this year's team faced.

"We learned things along the way," Darsch said prior to the announcement. "We had so much turnover from a year ago as far as who was going to get it done. We started thinking one thing and by January we thought another and by February we're thinking it's got to be this. We did make changes along the way, but maybe they were too late. There were probably some things on our end, like not recognizing everyone's pluses and minuses. But the players probably could have executed some of our options a little better."

Who's Next?

Geiger, intimated a national search would be done, with assistants and head coaches alike being considered. A strong reputation and association with a winning program wouldn't hurt.

"Both jobs would be similar profile," Geiger said of the search. "A track record from an effective program, one that's known success. Either a head coach or assistant coach that's established an outstanding record."

A name frequently mentioned is Detroit Mercy's Nikita Lowry, until last year an OSU assistant and one of the school's all-time best players. She's currently coaching the Titans in the NCAA Tournament, leading them to a 23-6 record going into the tourney in her first season at the helm.

Other possibilities that meet the Geiger criteria include Stanford assistant and former OSU player Amy Tucker, who guided the Cardinal last year while VanDerveer coached the United States Olympic team; and Capital University's

Dixie Jeffers, who has molded the Crusaders into the dominant Division III program in women's basketball.

A dark horse choice would be Pickerington High School's Dave Butcher, one of the more respected prep coaches in the country and OSU assistant coach Nicole Sanchez's high school coach. Butcher has reportedly longed for the Ohio State job for years.

Darsch's Resume

Darsch came to Columbus after spending seven years at Tennessee, where she helped Pat Summitt build the program into national prominence.

She's also had a litany of international experience, serving as Olympic assistant to VanDerveer in Atlanta in 1996 and to Summitt in 1984 in Los Angeles.

Darsch also helped mine gold at the 1993 World Championship Qualifying Tournament in Brazil and assisted the World University Games team in 1991.

There's no word on Darsch's future plans, though there was talk — which she denied — of a possible stint in the WNBA, the fledgling women's basketball league that begins operation this summer.

Good News Travels Fast

Columbus Unforgettables
Announces New Prices:

\$16.95 Per Book

\$45.00 For a Set of 3 Volumes
Available At Your Favorite Book Store

BSB HOTLINE
1-900-896-0666

Choose from these options:

- Option 1: Overview (a complete look at the day in OSU sports)
- Option 2: Football (weekly reports on headlines involving OSU football)
- Option 3: Football Recruiting (daily reports on recruiting)
- Option 4: Basketball (regular updates on the men's basketball program)

- Option 5: Basketball Recruiting (weekly reports on basketball recruiting)
- Option 6: Q & A (conversations with OSU players and coaches)
- Option 7: OSU Olympic Sports report (a look at OSU's non-revenue sports)
- Option 8: Commitment List (regular updates of OSU's verbal commitment list)

Calls can be made from rotary or touch tone phones. Callers under age 18 must have their parent's permission. Hotline sponsored by Buckeye Sports Bulletin, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio 43212. (614) 486-2202.

\$2 first
minute;
\$1 each
additional
minute

COLLEGE TRADITIONS

ROSE BOWL

CHAMPIONS



A - 100% Cotton T-Shirt With Helmets & Final Rose Bowl Score.
Oxford T-Shirt: M•L•XL - \$16.99 / XXL - \$18.99.
Ash Sweatshirt: M•L•XL - \$34.99 / XXL - \$38.99.



FRONT

BACK

1996
RUN TO THE ROSES
COMMEMORATIVE
VIDEOTAPE



B - Relive the Victories, Big Plays and Great Players that led us to the Big Ten Title and a Trip to Pasadena. - \$19.99.

C - "Rose Bowl Champions" Hat. Available in White or Black. - \$15.99.



D - Commemorative Mug. Features "Champions" Logo on Front and 1996 Season Schedule with Scores on Back. - \$9.99

RELOAD! T-Shirt



F - Ash, 100% Cotton "Rose Bowl Champions" T-Shirt.
M•L•XL \$15.99 XXL \$17.99



FRONT VIEW



BACK VIEW

E - Ash, 100% Cotton "RELOAD" T-Shirt.
M•L•XL \$16.99 XXL \$18.99



To Order...

CALL TOLL-FREE
1-800-628-4678
or FAX 1-614-291-5797
Add \$4.95 Shipping & Handling Per Order

VISIT US ON THE WEB!
<http://www.osu-sportswear.com>

315
OLENTANGY
RIVER RD.

College
Traditions

Varsity
Club

HIGH ST.

LANE AVE.

COLLEGE TRADITIONS
286 W. LANE AVE.
Columbus, Ohio 43201
(Next to Varsity Club)

SOURCE CODE: 9701