

Trevecca Men's Basketball History

President Mark Greathouse decided to hire Elmer Heaberlin in 1965 to start the Physical Education and Athletic Department. Heaberlin was to lay the groundwork for this new department. Heaberlin graduated from Trevecca in 1954 and wanted to fulfill a long-time desire to coach at Trevecca. It took Heaberlin three years to progress from an intramural program to starting intercollegiate athletics. Heaberlin was an Associate Professor of Physical Education in addition to being Director of Athletics. In 1967-1968, Bob Benson, of Benson Publishing Company, agreed to sponsor a basketball team in a city league. Heaberlin combined the best talent from four intramural basketball teams to form a roster for this non-sponsored college team. In the fall of 1968, Dr. Greathouse left Trevecca to become the President of the Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City.

Then, in 1968, Trevecca Nazarene College made another decision. That decision came under the leadership of President Mark R. Moore. It set in motion the beginning of Trevecca's intercollegiate athletic program. The first true intercollegiate basketball team started with Elmer Heaberlin as coach. His budget was \$100 for combined physical education and athletics. Elmer selected TROJANS as the nickname for the teams. When he left in January, 1969, Bill Boner was hired by Dr. Bill Strickland to finish the basketball season as coach. The team ended the season with a 0-10 record.

After finishing the 1969 basketball season, **Bill Boner** was named Athletic Director. He set his sights high. The team's record in 1969-1970 was 12-8 and in 1970-1971, 16-8. Using government money (BEOG), Boner was able to give scholarships to his incoming recruits. Boner hired Bill Bandy, a high school referee, to be his assistant coach and teach in the Physical Education Department. Boner had a budget of \$30,000 for his first full year with some funds for scholarships (never before allowed). Faculty members who were strong supporters of the program were Toby Williams and Bill Strickland. Bill Anderson, Assistant to the President and Dan Hatfield were also avid supporters.

When Bill Boner left for the TN State Senate in 1971, Chet Foraker was hired to coach Men's Basketball. Foraker had a good year with a 19-9 record. The school had joined SCAC and Foraker not only won the conference but he was named Coach of the Year. He left after the basketball season and started selling textbooks. Boner was officially 28-21 overall.

Richard Haynes, a young high school basketball coach from Kansas, followed Chet Foraker in 1972. He stayed for two years as coach and Athletic Director—then moving to the Admissions Department at Trevecca. Haynes went 14-41 overall and was 6-7 in the SCAC.

Elmore Vail then served as head coach and Athletic Director for four years—1974-1978. He came from Olivet Nazarene College where he was an Assistant Basketball Coach. After leaving the Athletic Department, he served as Dean of Students (at Trevecca) for a number of years. One of Vail's major contributions to the Athletic Department was to more than double the amount of scholarship for the athletes. Having been a coach, Vail was very supportive of the athletic program. Vail finished his career 23-85 with a 3-38 conference record.

In 1978, **Ron Bargatze**, Assistant Basketball Coach at Vanderbilt University, was named Head Basketball Coach. The course was now set for quality administration, coaches, teams, and players. Bargatze was a well-known coach in the field of basketball in Nashville and Middle Tennessee. He was an outstanding recruiter and was able to promote Trevecca and Trojan basketball in Nashville and the surrounding community. Even though he only stayed one year (he became Head Basketball Coach at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, TN), his recruiting class helped Trevecca for years to come. To this date, he still remains a friend to Trevecca and is interested in the basketball program. Bargatze went 14-18 in his first year and was 7-7 in VSAC play.

Trevecca's next basketball coach was **Frank Wilson**, who came from Olivet Nazarene College as their Head Basketball Coach. He was Trevecca's Basketball Coach for 14 years. His overall record was 285-174. His conference record was 138-85. His teams were Conference Champions three times and NAIA District 24 Champions in 1986-1987 (with six district appearances). Wilson was Conference Coach of the Year three times and NAIA District 24 Coach of the Year two times. In 1987, his team made Trevecca's first appearance at the NAIA National Basketball Tournament. One of his most notable memories was his wins over cross-town rivals David Lipscomb and Belmont.

Wilson finished his Hall of Fame career with a 285-174 record overall and went 138-85 in league play. His 1987 team reached the NAIA National Championships Elite Eight.

Sam Harris, who played under Coach Wilson at Olivet Nazarene College, served as the Trevecca head coach for 25 seasons. Harris' 376 wins are the most in Trevecca men's basketball history. He garnered 537 wins in 34 years as a collegiate head coach, leading four teams to the NAIA National Championships and one to the NCCAA National Championships. Over the years, Harris' teams won two regular season conference titles with him at the helm.

Harris' first national tournament team was the 2000-2001 Trojans who finished 21-12. The team lost to No. 1 Transylvania in the opening round of the 2001 NAIA National Championships.

The next two appearances were back-to-back trips to the Sweet 16. The 2003-2004 team (25-8) advanced to the NAIA Tournament after winning the TranSouth Athletic Conference regular season championship. They defeated Lewis-Clark State in the opening round before falling to No. 1 Mountain State. The 2005-2006 team went 26-7, defeating Lambuth University in the NAIA first round. Azusa Pacific ended their run. Harris was the TranSouth Coach of the Year in 2005.

The 2007-2008 Trojans turned in a 25-10 mark and again advanced to the Sweet 16. This time the Trojans defeated the University of Mobile in the opening round. No. 1 Georgetown College knocked off the Trojans 85-83 to advance to the Elite Eight.

Harris led the 2011-2012 team (22-12) to the NCCAA Region Championship, earning a national tournament bid where Trojans finished 2-1.

His best NCAA Div. II season came in 2015-2016 when the Trojans finished 8-4 in Great Midwest Athletic Conference play, advancing to the title game. Additionally, Trevecca advanced to the first GMAC Championship game in 2012-2013 season.

During his tenure, Harris coached six All-American players, five at the NAIA level and one NCCAA honoree. Eight of Harris' Trojans made the NAIA honorable-mention All-American list. Five of his Trojans have been inducted into the Trevecca Athletic Hall of Fame: David Blanford, Michael Blivens, Will Partin, Curtis Lewis, and Eric Price.

Three of his players were selected conference player of the year. Eric Price and Alex Renfroe were selected TranSouth Player of the Year, while Byron Sanford was named the Great Midwest Player of the Year.

Harris finished his career with a 376-400 overall record and went 165-199 in conference games. He led the program to the NAIA National Tournament four times (2001, 2005, 2006, 2008). His final three appearances ended in the Sweet 16.

Omar Mance was named the ninth basketball coach prior to the 2018-2019 season. Mance came to Trevecca after serving as an assistant coach at his alma mater, Rice University. Mance formerly served at Vanderbilt as the director of recruiting and player personnel. Mance has gained experience working within a Christian university prior to coming to the Hill. Mance was on staff at Liberty University from 2013 to 2016 where he helped the Flames improve in Big South competition.

During his first season, Mance guided the Trojans to a 4-21 season which included contests against Div. I opponents, Liberty and Belmont. Trevecca broke and then reset the 3-point field goals made for a season in a pair of home games. In an 83-74 victory over G-MAC foe Tiffin, the Trojans made 17 three-point field goals, which broke the nearly 10-year-old record of 16 made during the 2009-2010 season. Over two weeks later, the Trojans reset the three-point field goal mark with a 18 made three-point shots in a 72-63 win over Davis & Elkins.

The 2019-20 season ended by finishing with a four-game winning streak led by Division I transfer Adam Webb. Webb helped the Trojans to a 6-21 overall mark and a 6-12 showing for G-MAC contests by collecting his spot on the G-MAC's All-Defensive team. The Trojans made a nationally televised appearance on ESPN+ with a meeting against longtime NAIA rival, Lipscomb University. The Trojans led the Bison 46-44 at halftime. The Trojans were led in scoring by junior Austin Wills who tallied 11.2 ppg by holding the league's fourth-best 3-pt shooting percentage (.419). Webb turned back 45 shots for second-most in the G-MAC as the Trojans finished 10th in the league, missing the conference playoffs by a narrow margin.

The Mance era continued with back-to-back five-win seasons in 2020-21 (5-17, 5-15 G-MAC) and 2021-22 (5-22, 2-18 G-MAC) before ending with seven games remaining in the 2022-23 (1-18, 0-13 G-MAC) season. Mance ended his run at Trevecca with a 21-99 overall record and was 17-74 in Great Midwest play.

Alex Huisman, and assistant on the Mance staff, finished out the 2022-23 season going 1-6 (1-6 GMAC).

The 2023-24 season brought new head coach **Kevin Carroll**. Carroll served as an assistant for Lenny Acuff at Lipscomb University. He played for Coach Acuff at Berry College before serving as his assistant at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Carroll also served as a successful high school coach and later as the head coach at Maryville University, a NCAA Division II school in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Carroll era opened with a bang in an exhibition win over Rhodes College at Homecoming and was followed up by winning the first regular season game, a few days later, at Southwest Baptist. After only three non-conference losses, the Trojans rattled off a stretch of winning 10 of 11 games spanning from November until the middle of January.

The surprising start began to sink in nationally and regionally as the men's basketball team received votes for an NCAA Division II Top 25 poll for the first time since moving to the NCAA with the 2013-2014 season. The Trojans received 21 points in the week eight D2CCA (Division II College Sports Communicators) Top 25 Media Poll. They also peaked that week as the #3 team in the D2CCA Midwest Region poll, the highest in the poll's history.

The 2023-24 Trojans scorched the nets finishing as the second highest scoring team in the Great Midwest, going from 55.7 PPG to 78.8 PPG in one season which is an extraordinary 23.1 points per game improvement from the previous season. This mark is also the best scoring average for a Trojan team in the Div. II era.

Several records were set during the season, two in one game, a 103-71 win at Northwood University. First, the team hit 19 three-pointers which is now the all-time school (NAIA/NCAA) record. Additionally, they recorded an NCAA D2 Era record with a 67.9% three-point percentage.

Jalen Page, a three-time Great Midwest Player of the Week candidate, was selected to the All-Conference First Team in addition to earning a spot on the D2CCA All-Region team. Peter Lambesis was also named CSC Academic All-District and All-American.