

UNCG Names Breneman Head Softball Coach

Written by Matt McColleston
Wednesday, 18 July 2012 13:02

Janelle Breneman, who has spent the past eight years in the SEC and ACC, has been named the ninth head softball coach in UNCG softball history, Director of Athletics Kim Record announced Wednesday. Breneman brings 17 years

of collegiate coaching experience to UNCG, including nine years as a head coach at both Bucknell and East Stroudsburg.

"We are excited to welcome Janelle Breneman to the UNCG family," Record said. "She brings a wealth of knowledge both as a coach and a player to our program. She has been in the collegiate coaching ranks for 17 years and has developed a strong passion and knowledge for the game of softball. Her experience at the highest levels of collegiate competition in the SEC and ACC, will pay dividends for the UNCG softball program."

Breneman spent the past two seasons as the top assistant coach in the prestigious SEC at South Carolina under head coach Beverly Smith. She was the infield coach and played a pivotal role in the team's defense, while assisting the team's offense. Under her direction, South Carolina saw its fielding percentage improve over 26 points her first year in Columbia, while leading the SEC in double plays. Offensively, the Gamecocks improved in every statistical category during her tenure, including raising the team batting average 51 points in her first year. "I am grateful for the opportunity that Kim Record and the UNCG athletic department have given to me to lead the softball program," Breneman said. "I am looking forward to this new challenge in my career. UNCG athletics is heading in a promising direction, and I am eager to be involved in the progress. I look forward to interacting with the student-athletes and making their experience with the softball program at UNCG a memorable one."

Prior to South Carolina, Breneman spent six seasons as an assistant coach at North Carolina for head coach Donna Papa. She helped the Tar Heels post five 40-plus win seasons and advance to the NCAA Tournament every season. She was an integral part of the program that was ranked in the Top 25 in four of her six seasons in Chapel Hill.

"I am thankful for the great mentors and friends who have helped me along the way in Jan Hutchinson, Carey Snyder, Donna Papa and Beverly Smith," Breneman said.

Under her guidance, the North Carolina defense led the Atlantic Coast Conference in fielding each year and finished in the top 33 in NCAA Division I all six seasons. Offensively, the Tar Heels ranked in the top 100 in NCAA Division I in home runs per at-bat her final three seasons and she helped Danielle Spaulding become a three-time All-America recipient. During her tenure, eight different student-athletes received 14 All-ACC selections.

Breneman came to UNC after two head coaching stints over a nine-year period at Bucknell (2001-04) and East Stroudsburg (1996-2000). During her run at Bucknell, the Bison made the Patriot League Tournament in 2004, when she was selected as the Patriot League Coach of the Year. She served five seasons as the head coach at Division II East Stroudsburg and helped the Warriors post their first winning season in four years with a 21-18 record in her rookie campaign.

Breneman was also a standout on the field, playing two years in the Women's Pro Softball League for the Georgia Pride and was a four-year letterwinner at Bloomsburg University. She was the starting shortstop during her career and earned All-America honors as a senior. A

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three-time All-Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference selection, she still holds the Huskies' career record with 351 assists. She helped Bloomsburg to the NCAA Division II Championships all four years, finishing second in the nation in 1991 and third in both 1990 and 1992. Breneman earned a bachelor's degree in adult health and cardiac rehabilitation from Bloomsburg in 1993. She was inducted into the Bloomsburg Athletics Hall of Fame in 2006 and the Ephrata High School Hall of Fame in 2001.

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