

Kevin Nickelberry

High Level Basketball Coach & Elite Recruiter

Kevin Nickelberry, a veteran coach of more than 30 years in the ACC, SEC and Big East, is in his first season as an assistant coach at Florida State. Nickelberry has coaching experience as both a head coach and as an assistant coach at the highest levels of college basketball, with nearly 200 career wins and appearances in both the NCAA and CBI Tournaments as a head coach. He has been a part of seven programs that have made postseason appearances. He has worked in all facets of a collegiate program with responsibilities ranging from player development and pregame scouting to in-game coaching and game management as well as previously serving as a head coach, with several accolades along the way.

Currently an assistant coach for the Seminoles, Nickelberry helped assemble a transfer class that has earned FSU a first round bye in the ACC Tournament. He came to the Seminoles following one season as the Associate Head Coach and Recruiting Coordinator at Georgetown in the Big East. He helped Georgetown gain the No. 2 ranked Transfer Portal recruiting class in the nation in 2022.

In March 2022, Nickelberry was named to the Advancement of Blacks in Sports (ABIS) 2022 Men's Basketball Assistant Coaches Watch List for his efforts at LSU, and was named to the list again in 2022-23 and 2023-24. During his stint as head coach at Hampton, he was named among the top 25 "Up-and-Coming" coaches by Sporting News (2008). His tenure at Hampton saw him turn the team's scoring defense from 168 in Division I to 12th in the NCAA by the end of his third year. During his various tenures as an assistant coach, he was named by Basketball Times, The Hoop Scoop and Rivals.com as one of the top assistants in the country and has worked in many areas including recruiting, fundraising, marketing and public relations.

Quick out of the gate at Georgetown, Nickelberry got started on assembling a class from the NCAA transfer portal. Following seven commitments, including Brandon Murray (LSU), Akok Akok (UConn) and bringing Qudus Wahab (Maryland) back to the Hilltop, the class was tabbed No. 2 on 247Sports.com's Transfer Portal rankings.

Nickelberry, who has over a decade of service as a Division I men's basketball head coach, came to Georgetown after 3 seasons at LSU, which included a stint as Interim Head Coach in 2022 in which he led the Tigers into the NCAA Tournament. The DC native was responsible for bringing a wealth of talent to Baton Rouge as his efforts contributed to a trio of top 10 classes in as many seasons at LSU (2020 - 5th; 2021 - 6th; 2022 - 9th). Three players from his time at LSU were drafted (including two first round picks), and five players saw time in the NBA during the 2023-24 season.

Nickelberry was part of an LSU staff that has averaged 20 wins over the last two seasons and reached the second round of the 2021 NCAA Tournament. That team was led by sophomore Trendon Watford and freshman Cameron Thomas, both first-team All-SEC selections and junior Javonte Smart, a second team all-league veteran point guard. The Tigers played in the 2021 SEC Tournament championship game for the first time since 1993.

Nickelberry was the lead recruiter for the 2021 class that saw LSU bring in a five-star center and a duo of four-star guards to go along with another pair of four stars and a three-star signee. In his three years with the Tigers, LSU advanced to the 2021 and 2022 NCAA Tournaments (2020 was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic) and achieved 20 wins in two of his three years. Before being named Assistant Coach prior to the 2020-21 season, Nickelberry served the 2019-20 season as the Assistant to Head Coach Will Wade.

Nickelberry previously served as the head coach at Howard University (2010-19), Hampton (2006-09) and the Columbia Union women's team (1991-94). He also served as an assistant coach at Howard, Monmouth, Holy Cross, Charlotte and Clemson before being named head coach at Hampton. His 2019 Howard squad became the first team at the school since 1992 to advance to postseason play, earning a spot in the College Basketball Invitational field. His teams at Howard recorded GPAs of at least 3.0 in eight of his seasons at Howard.

All but one four-year senior graduated during his tenure as head coach. Off the court, he stressed academic work, including having nearly 50 players named to the MEAC Commissioner's All-Academic team. He also pushed his squad to a 1.000 Academic Progress Rate for 2014-15.

Nickelberry left as No. 2 in all-time wins in Howard history. When he took over the job at Howard in 2010, he inherited a program that had not seen a winning season in almost a decade. He became known as a "program builder" both on and off the court. Through good recruiting efforts, he brought in players and coached them through seasons that earned first team All-MEAC honors and worked with multiple players that would earn conference rookie of the year and player of the year honors.

He recruited and coached three players who made the Top 50 All-Time MEAC team –James Daniels who was both Rookie of the Year and Player of the Year; Charles Williams, the Rookie of the Year who was the leading scorer in MEAC history; and, R. J. Cole who earned Rookie and Player of the Year honors. While head coach at Hampton, he was rated among the top 25 "Up-and-Coming" coaches by Sporting News and hoopscooponline.com in 2008.

At Hampton, he averaged 10 conference wins a year and had two recruiting classes ranking in the top 60 in the country. While there, his team's scoring defense went from 168 in Division I to 12th in the NCAA by the end of his third year.

During his years as an assistant coach, he was named by Basketball Times, The Hoop Scoop and Rivals.com as one of the top assistants in the country. Nickelberry worked in all areas including recruiting, fundraising, marketing and public relations.

In his coaching career, he has been a part of preparing players who earned over 20 Rookie/Newcomer/Player of the Year honors as well as coaching over 30 all-conference players. Prior to beginning his coaching career, Nickelberry was involved in many successful entrepreneur ventures. He was the president of two public relations firms and founded an at-risk youth non-profit organization in the Washington, D. C. area.

He spent the 2009-10 year as the head coach of the Libya National Basketball team and the team with Coach Nickelberry at the helm, won more games than any other time in international play. Nickelberry began his coaching career as the head women's basketball coach at Columbia Union College in 1991.

The 59-year-old Nickelberry was born in Washington, D.C., and played at Virginia Wesleyan University where he graduated in 1986 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications. He is father to three sons – Carter, Kyan and Kelby.

The Nickelberry File

Birthdate: October 15, 1964

Children Carter, Kyan, Kelby

Hometown: Washington, D.C.

Education: Virginia Wesleyan University, '86

College Coaching Experience

1991-92: Assistant Coach, Columbia Union

1991-94: Head WC, Columbia Union

1995-98: Assistant Coach, Howard

1998-99: Assistant Coach, Monmouth

1999-01: Assistant Coach, Holy Cross

2001-03: Assistant Coach, Charlotte

2003-06: Assistant Coach, Clemson

2006-09: Head Coach, Hampton

2009-10: Assistant Coach, DePaul

2010-19: Head Coach, Howard

2019-20: Assistant to the HC, LSU

2020-22: Assistant Coach, LSU

2022: Interim Head Coach, LSU

2022-23: Associate Head Coach, Georgetown

2023-Present: Assistant Coach, Florida State