

DEREK SIMMONS

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Lifelong basketball coach and player development specialist with 45+ years in athletics and 15+ years of head coaching experience. Proven track record developing student-athletes from youth through collegiate level, with multiple players earning scholarships and advancing to higher levels of competition. Executive leader with extensive budget management, strategic planning, and team development expertise. Passionate about building championship-caliber programs through player-centered coaching, academic excellence, and community engagement.

COACHING EXPERIENCE

Head Coach, High School Basketball

East Ridge High School | 2018-2020

Led freshman and sophomore basketball programs with emphasis on skill development and academic achievement

- Directed freshman team to 17-2 record, avenging both regular season losses in home playoff victories
- Implemented player development system focusing on fundamentals, basketball IQ, and leadership skills
- Maintained 100% academic eligibility for all student-athletes throughout tenure
- Developed practice plans and game strategies emphasizing teamwork, effort, and positive attitude

AAU Head Coach

Minnesota Heat, D1 Minnesota, Grassroots Sizzle | 2014-2023

Head coach for elite AAU basketball programs competing at regional and national levels

- Led 17u team with multiple players advancing to collegiate basketball, including full scholarship recipient at University of Jamestown
- Coached teams in premier tournaments across Kansas City, Chicago, and Minneapolis metro areas
- Developed comprehensive recruiting strategies connecting players with collegiate opportunities
- Built strong relationships with college coaches, scouts, and basketball community throughout Midwest
- Mentored student-athletes through college recruitment process, emphasizing academic and athletic balance

Youth Head Coach & Program Director

East Ridge Athletic Association | 2013-2021

Head coach across multiple competitive levels with program leadership responsibilities

- Coached A, B, and C travel teams, achieving 2nd place state finish (6B) and 3rd place state finish (7A)
- Served as Basketball Board President, overseeing program operations for 200+ participating families
- Developed player evaluation systems, practice curricula, and competitive strategies
- Managed coaching staff hiring, development, and evaluation across multiple age groups
- Created positive team culture emphasizing sportsmanship, effort, and continuous improvement

ATHLETIC BACKGROUND

Multi-Sport Student-Athlete

Nickerson High School, Kansas | 1988-1991

Four-year varsity athlete in basketball, football, and baseball with leadership roles

- Basketball: Four-year varsity player, state champion (freshman), 3rd place (sophomore), 4th place (junior)
- Football: Starting quarterback leading team to first state playoff appearance in 50 years
- Baseball: Four-year starter contributing to two state championships and multiple top-four finishes
- Heart of America Basketball Camp All-Star selection, receiving collegiate scholarship offers in all three sports
- Elected Senior Class President, demonstrating leadership and peer recognition

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Executive Director & Vice President

Star Tribune Media | 2013-2024

Executive leadership across multiple departments with budget management and strategic planning responsibilities

- Managed annual budgets exceeding \$2M with consistent fiscal responsibility and resource optimization
- Led cross-functional teams of 50+ professionals, implementing performance evaluation and development systems
- Developed strategic initiatives resulting in \$20M+ revenue generation and operational efficiency improvements
- Created talent development programs with measurable advancement outcomes for team members
- Collaborated with executive leadership on organizational direction, strategic planning, and goal achievement

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Bachelor of Science, Mass Communications | Kansas State University

Student Ambassador, Sports Editor, Basketball Correspondent for Associated Press, KC Star, Wichita Eagle

Coaching Certifications: Trusted Coaches Certification (background check, concussion protocol, youth safety), Fundamentals of Coaching (Kansas State University)

COACHING PHILOSOPHY & ACHIEVEMENTS

Player Development Success: Multiple former players advancing to collegiate basketball with scholarship opportunities, including current University of Jamestown player

Coaching Philosophy: Emphasis on player-led teams, positive communication, energy/effort/attitude, and developing student-athletes who compete for each other while maintaining academic excellence

Community Engagement: Active in Minnesota basketball community through AAU programs, high school coaching, and youth development initiatives. Current volunteer with pet therapy program and nonprofit animal rescue advisory board