

Samantha Quigley Smith Named New SIUE Women's Head Basketball Coach

by Joe Pott

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EDWARDSVILLE – [Samantha Quigley Smith](#) has been named SIUE women's basketball head coach, Director of Athletics Tim Hall announced Tuesday.

Smith is the sixth head coach in program history and the third at the Division I level.

"Today is a great day for SIUE women's basketball," Hall said. "I am so pleased to announce Samantha as our new head coach. Throughout the search, she clearly stood out as the candidate whose vision for the future, relationship-building ability, competency in the x's and o's, recruiting prowess and general positive can-do spirit can take this program to a championship level."

Smith comes to Edwardsville after serving four years in the same position at Lewis University, a Division II institution in Romeoville, Illinois, where she amassed a record of 83-34 (.709 winning percentage). She was honored as the 2020-21 Great Lakes Valley Coach of the Year.

"I am incredibly excited for the opportunity to be SIUE's next leader of the women's basketball program," Smith said. "The phenomenal people I encountered during the interview process truly told our family this was the place for us."

"I want to thank Chancellor Randy Pembroke and Director of Athletics Tim Hall for their support and commitment to women's basketball, and also for this amazing opportunity to lead these bright young women," Smith continued. "I would also like to thank Deputy Athletic Director Jason Coomer and the search committee that worked tirelessly throughout this process."

In four seasons at Lewis, Smith guided the Flyers to two seasons of 20-plus wins and three NCAA Division II NCAA Tournament appearances. Her 2018-19 team went 27-5 and advanced to the second round of the NCAA Tournament. While at Lewis, Smith mentored three Division II All-Americans, and coached 2019-20 National Player of the Year Jessica Kelliher and 2020-21 GLVC Freshman of the Year Jenna Badali.

"She is a student of the game and is connected at the highest level of women's college basketball," Hall added. "It is clear that the comprehensive welfare of her student-athletes is a high priority. Many I spoke to talked of long-enduring relationships she has with current and former players."

Prior to her Lewis tenure, Smith was the head coach at St. Francis, an NAIA school in Joliet, Illinois, where she became the youngest head coach in the nation at just 22 years old. At St. Francis, she turned a team that was 10-22 prior to her arrival into a 32-win program which made its first-ever appearance in the NAIA Final Four. She coached three NAIA All-Americans at St. Francis. The Fighting Saints were a combined 62-7 during her final two seasons as head coach and finished the 2017 season as the No. 1-ranked team in the NAIA Division II Coaches Poll.

Academics remains a priority for Smith. While at St. Francis, the program's cumulative grade point average improved from 2.35 to 3.5.

Smith also has been a part of USA women's basketball since 2014, including two seasons as an on-court assistant where she was part of medal-winning teams at the FIBA American and European Championships.

She currently is a member of the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) Board of Directors.

As a player, Smith competed at DePaul from 2006-11. She ranked 20th in school history with 1,273 points. Her 484 career assists rank third all-time for the Blue Demons. She was a two-time All-Big East selection and an Academic All-District honoree.

A 2006 graduate of Joliet Catholic, she finished her high school career with 1,910 points.

She is 2020 inductee into the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame as a player.

Athletics runs in the family. Her late father was a standout basketball player at St. Francis and the basketball court at St. Francis bears his name. He also is the former head tennis coach at Lewis. Her mother Chris and stepdad Don Strle also both played basketball at St. Francis, where her mother's jersey is retired. Her uncle, Brian Michalak is the current baseball coach at St. Francis and formerly was the women's basketball head coach at Lewis. Her sister Allie played at DePaul and currently plays in Yekaterinburg, Russia and recently won a Euroleague Championship. During the summer, she stars with the Chicago Sky of the WNBA, where she is the all-time leading scorer and a three-time WNBA All-Star.

Older brothers Ryan Quigley played professional baseball in the San Diego Padres organization and currently is the Admission Director at Joliet Catholic, as well as a football and baseball coach. Younger brother Jacob played and coached Tennis at St. Francis and currently is a tennis pro in Chicago.

Smith's husband, Greg Smith, played basketball at St. Francis. The couple has four children, Cooper, 7; Jackson, 5; daughter Logan, 4; and Flynn 2.

Smith's hiring is pending final approval from the Southern Illinois University Board of Trustees. A formal press conference to introduce Smith will be announced soon.

What they're saying about Samantha Quigley Smith

In Sam Quigley, SIUE hired a future coaching All-Star. As a player, Sam is one of the best captains I have ever coached in 48 years of coaching. Sam's head coaching record at the NAIA and Division II levels speaks for itself. Sam Quigley is a special coach,

because she makes the game fun for her players while also holding those same players accountable to always strive to be their best.

-Doug Bruno, DePaul women's basketball Head Coach

Sam was one of the most competitive players I've ever been around, and she brings that same winning mindset as a coach. She is a proven winner at every level she's competed, and will bring high expectations and standards of excellence with her to Edwardsville. Sam is a rising star in this profession. SIUE is getting a fantastic coach, but an even better person who will be a great mentor and role model for her student-athletes.

-Bart Brooks, Belmont women's basketball head coach

First and foremost, SIUE is getting a fierce competitor. She is one of the most competitive players I have ever coached. Having coached in the league, I have no doubt she will do a great job at SIUE. She does a great job attracting talent, and she is a great coach.

-Samantha Williams, current Tennessee women's basketball assistant coach, former Eastern Kentucky head coach