



Tribune-Star/Joseph C. Garza

New Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College men's basketball coach Jesse McClung talks about the type of offense he will run during his introduction Tuesday in the Jeanne Knoerle Sports and Recreation Center on the SMWC campus.

# Woods names new b-ball coach

## Jesse McClung introduced Tuesday

TRIBUNE-STAR STAFF REPORT

Indianapolis native Jesse McClung is the new head men's basketball coach at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, according to an announcement from SMWC Associate Vice President of Athletics Kevin Lanke on Tuesday.

An Indianapolis native

and a three-year starter at Lawrence North High School, McClung is the third men's basketball coach in Woods program history, arriving here following a six-year stint as associate head coach at Marian University.

The Knights posted a 124-38 record over the past six seasons and qualified for

six straight NAIA national tournaments, reaching the Elite Eight in 2019 and Final Four in 2020.

"The Saint Mary-of-the-Woods athletic department is stronger today with the naming of Jesse McClung as men's basketball coach," Lanke said during an afternoon news conference.

"In addition to his strong basketball accomplishment résumé as a player and

coach, Jesse has a passion for the off-court development of student-athletes. His commitment and vision to build the program over the next few years will fit in well with the college's overall enrollment and athletic goals."

McClung's time at Marian was instrumental in preparing him for his first collegiate head-coaching job.

Turn to **MCCLUNG, B2**

# McClung

Continued from B1

"I'd just like to thank president Dan Elsener, athletic director Steve Downing, head coach Scott Heady as well as the previous coach I worked under, John Grimes," McClung said. "They taught me a lot. It was a situation where you think you'd be there forever, but this opportunity came and I'm excited to be here at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

"Coach [Mike] Hunter did an excellent job [last season at SMWC]. I'm just looking forward to building off the success he had. We'll build it brick by brick, step-by-step."

McClung's coaching career began in 2008 as an assistant at Marian, focusing on recruiting. He moved on to NCAA Division III Wabash College from 2011 to 2014, helping the Little Giants reach as high as No. 14 in the national rankings.

For the next two years, McClung gained valuable experience as a head coach at the high school level, guiding Bethesda Christian to a 38-13 record.

After playing for coach Jack



Tribune-Star/Joseph C. Garza

New Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College men's head basketball coach Jesse McClung poses for a photo with mascot Onyx during his introduction Tuesday in the Jeanne Knoerle Sports and Recreation Center on the SMWC campus.

Keefer at Lawrence North, McClung continued his playing career at Barton County Community College. He moved on to Ball State, playing two seasons that included earning the team defensive award and the team spark award. McClung was a captain for his final collegiate season at the University of Indianapolis.

SMWC is coming off a 10-17 season overall and a 5-13 record in the River States Conference under Hunter in 2022-23.

Among men's basketball coaches who took notice of the hiring from around the state Tuesday were DePauw's Rusty Loyd (a Terre Haute resident who formerly guided Rose-Hulman's men), Indiana Wesleyan's

Greg Tonagel and IUPUI's Matt Crenshaw.

"The time, energy and effort that Jesse has put into his coaching career have prepared him well for this opportunity," Loyd assessed. "He has helped build one of the best NAIA programs in the state and I know that he will help build Saint Mary-of-the-Woods into a contender as well. He will be a great addition to the community and a regular fixture in the Wabash Valley. I couldn't be more excited for him and his family."

"Jesse is one of the best up-and-coming coaches in our profession," Tonagel said. "He can flat-out recruit and I have no doubts he will be a great leader of young men."

"Jesse McClung exemplifies leadership, driven by a passion and unwavering work ethic," Crenshaw mentioned. "With his exceptional recruiting skills and unwavering dedication to player development, Jesse stands out in our coaching field. He has a true understanding of the game, coupled with his effective teaching abilities, that sets him apart. I am thrilled to witness the remarkable success that Jesse and his program are bound to achieve."