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OMAHA'S CHRIS CRUTCHFIELD RECIPIENT OF 2025 BEN JOBE AWARD

The top minority head coach in division I college basketball

SAN ANTONIO, TX -- Omaha's Chris Crutchfield is the recipient of the 2025 Ben Jobe National Coach of the Year award, which is presented annually to the top minority head coach in division I college basketball.

Crutchfield led the Mavericks to a school-record 22 victories. He also led the program to its first Summit League regular championship, first Summit League tournament titles and the first-ever trip to the NCAA Tournament.

"Chris Crutchfield lost one of the best players in mid-major college basketball and still managed to put together the best season in the history of Omaha basketball," said Angela Lento, Vice President of CollegeInsider.com. "He finally got a chance to run his own program and took Omaha from the bottom of the Summit League to the NCAA Tournament. Chris Crutchfield can coach."

The season was highlighted by a nine-game win streak which ranks as the longest since Omaha joined the DI ranks and the third-longest all-time for the Mavs. The Mavericks' elite offense ranked second in the conference, averaging 84.2 points per game and had the Summit League's best scoring margin at 7.3.

He guided the Mavs to 16 wins against conference opponents in 2024-25 and under his tutelage, senior Marquel Sutton was named the 2024-25 Summit League Player of the Year.

Fellow senior JJ White and junior Ja'Sean Glover also earned All-League plaudits on the First Team and All-Defensive Team, respectively.

Crutchfield spent one season at Oregon before arriving in Omaha. Prior to Oregon, Crutchfield spent the 2020-21 season as the head coach at East Central in Ada, Oklahoma where he coached his sons, Jalen and Josh. He also served as the associate head coach at Arkansas, where he helped sign a Top Five recruiting class in the nation.

Crutchfield spent eight seasons under Lon Kruger at Oklahoma where he served as an associate head coach. During his eight years with the Sooners, Crutchfield played a crucial role in recruiting and developing current Atlanta Hawks point guard Trae Young – the first five-star recruit of Kruger's tenure at OU – and Indiana Pacers shooting guard Buddy Hield. Hield was named the winner of the 2016 Wooden Award, and Naismith Trophy as the National Player of the Year. He was also the first player in Big-12 history to be named Player of the Year twice.

While at Oklahoma, the Sooners earned six NCAA Tournament berths including a trip to the Final Four in 2016. Before his move to Oklahoma, Crutchfield was an assistant coach at Oral Roberts from 2007-11, TCU from 2005-07, and New Mexico State from 2001-05.

Crutchfield made his coaching debut at Omaha in the 1995-96 season. He then followed Omaha head coach Tim Carter to the University of Texas-San Antonio, where he served as an assistant coach for the Roadrunners from 1996-97. He earned his first head coaching role with Tyler Junior College, a position he held from 1999-01.

The Ben Jobe Award is named in honor of one of the most iconic coaches in the history of basketball at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. He is best known as the head coach of Southern University, a position he held for 12 seasons. He was also head coach at Alabama A&M, Alabama State, Talladega, Tuskegee, and South Carolina State.

His record at Southern was 209-141 and included four NCAA Tournament appearances. He also coached the Jaguars to one NIT appearance, five SIAC championships, 11 SWAC titles and two NAIA Tournament Championships. Perhaps his most memorable moment as a coach was leading No. 15 seed Southern to a 93-78 win over No. 2 Georgia Tech in the first round of the 1993 NCAA Tournament. It stands as one of the great upsets in the history of the event.

Coach Jobe passed away on March 10, 2017.

BEN JOBE AWARD FINALISTS

Alvin Brooks	Lamar
Penny Collins	Tennessee State
CHRIS CRUTCHFIELD	OMAHA
Travis DeCuire	Montana
Dennis Gates	Missouri
Penny Hardaway	Memphis
Cornelius Jackson	Marshall
Kevin Johnson	Southern
James Jones	Yale
Mike Jones	UNCG
Robert Jones	Norfolk State
Chris Markwood	Maine
Erik Martin	South Carolina State
Ritchie McKay	Liberty
Antoine Pettway	Kennesaw State
Richie Riley	South Alabama
Daniyal Robinson	Cleveland State
Kelvin Sampson	Houston
Patrick Sellers	Central Connecticut State
Takayo Siddle	UNCW
Duane Simpkins	American
Tony Skinn	George Mason
Shaka Smart	Marquette
Damon Stoudamire	Georgia Tech
Drew Valentine	Loyola Chicago

PREVIOUS AWARD WINNERS

Donte' Jackson, Grambling (2024); Jerry Stackhouse, Vanderbilt (2023); Kelvin Sampson, Houston (2022); Leonard Hamilton, Florida State (2021); Damon Stoudamire, Pacific (2020); James Jones, Yale (2019); Donte' Jackson, Grambling (2018); Jamion Christian, Mount St. Mary's (2017); Dana Ford, Tennessee State (2016); Bobby Collins, UMES (2015); Willis Wilson, Texas A&M Corpus Christi (2016); Kevin Ollie, Connecticut (2015); Sean Woods, Mississippi Valley State (2014); Cuonzo Martin, Missouri State (2013); Ed Cooley, Fairfield (2012).

ABOUT COLLEGEINSIDER.COM

Established in 1996, CollegeInsider.com has been at the forefront of promoting college basketball online. In the July 27, 1998, issue of ESPN the Magazine, College Insider was ranked

No. 24 on the magazine's list of *99 Things to do Before you Die*. College Insider created the Mid-Major Top 25[®], the measuring stick for men's and women's programs outside of the proverbial power leagues, and has 18 national awards presented annually, including the Lute Olson Award, Lou Henson Award, and the John McLendon Award. The CollegeInsider.com All-Access series has been nominated for 5 Emmy Awards and won 2013 Emmy, for its' feature on New York City Basketball (Iona, LIU-Brooklyn and Manhattan). CI also created *This Game No Secret*, which debuted during the 2016 CIT and now has become an annual event, which has included programs like Duke, Houston, Miami, Ohio State, Ole Miss, Texas and Virginia.

NOTE: Portions of the press release came from University of Nebraska Omaha releases.

