

Fred Hoiberg, The Mayor Of Iowa, Could Be The NBA's Next Great Coach

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There has always seemed to be invisible lines in the sand drawn between the amateur nature of the NCAA and the professional entity that is the NBA. The lines are not visible, but over the course of time they have been felt, and one of the most profound lines has been in the transition of coaching from college to the next level.

Coaching elite the likes of Rick Pitino, John Calipari, and Fran Tarkanian all ascended to the professional ranks only to be humbled by the game they taught so well on the college level.

Situation and circumstance play more of a role in the missteps than basketball IQ in these situations.

Petino and Calipari road their hot names to the Northeast with Petino in New York Knicks (87-89) and Boston Celtics (97-01) while Calipari (96-99) took on the same role with the New Jersey Nets. Neither coaching great was equipped with all-star talent and therefore underachieved until their were relieved of their duties. The Nets acquired [Stephon Marbury](#) before letting Calipari go and and the Celtics reached the Eastern Conference Finals the year after Pitino.

Tark was the Running Rebels in the early 1990's, but took on the challenge of the [San Antonio Spurs](#) before they landed [Tim Duncan](#) and became a dynasty.

Since then the water has been lukewarm to college coaches looking to make the same transition. Recently teams flirted with bringing in Tom Izzo, Mike Krzvwewski, and Calipari again. The [Charlotte Bobcats](#) went in a different direction in hiring career assistant Mike Dunlap. Over the past 32 years Dunlap has sat on the bench with [George Karl](#) , Ernie Kent, Steve Lavin, George Raveling, and Ed Goorjian until he finally got the call to be the man.

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The next name that is garnering some buzz is Iowa State University's Fred Hoiberg. The "Mayor" has done wonders in three years with the Cyclones.

He has earned that moniker based on his personal historic relationship with Ames, Iowa as a high school player, college athlete, and now rising star in the coaching ranks. Around the league Hoiberg is a name that has traction for potential head coaching jobs next season.

As an NBA player Hoiberg was a role player that played a role teams that made it to the Conference Finals three times with Indiana and Minnesota. His career came to an abrupt end with a heart condition due to an enlarged aortic root and a surgery. That led to the pursuit of a job on the [Minnesota Timberwolves](#) coaching staff, followed by a role in the front office, and eventually the head coaching job at his Alma Mater.

In his three years with the Cyclones they have gone 62-39 with two wins in the NCAA Tournament. Just last week they lost a heart-breaker against favorite Ohio State on a controversial call that would have vaulted them past the second round for the first time in 14 years.

The system Hoiberg runs is translatable to the NBA level as they get up and down the floor, shoot the ball from the perimeter, and allow their best player to showcase his skill-set.

Ask 2012 first round pick [Royce White](#) and/or current member of the [Phoenix Suns](#) if their former college coach can make it at this level. They both flourished in the system and there are a few current Cyclones that will be playing at the next level very soon in part because of the tutelage of The Mayor.

Over his ten year NBA career Hoiberg was peppered with the knowledge of [Larry Brown](#), Larry Bird, Tim Floyd, Flip Saunders, and Kevin McHale. All with different styles and wisdom to pass along.

If the past 5-6 years are an indication of the potential Hoiberg has at landing a head coaching job soon, the odds are in his favor. Former role players that learn the game from watching it

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play out in front of them every night like [Scott Brooks](#) (Oklahoma City Thunder), Vinny del Negro ([Los Angeles Clippers](#)), [Monty Williams](#) (New Orleans Hornets), and [Jacque Vaughn](#) (Orlando Magic). Giving young coaches a shot is also the norm with Frank Vogel (Indiana Pacers) and Eric Spoelstra (Miami Heat) leading their teams to the top of the Eastern Conference; not to mention [Mark Jackson](#) ([Golden State Warriors](#)).

All of those teams took a chance on a new face with the reputation and after just two seasons five of the seven have paid off in unfathomable ways reaching the very apex of NBA coaching success.

About a third of the NBA is led by retread coaches with mixed results in their careers, most of them are under .500 this season and have the potential of losing their jobs this summer. One of the most admirable traits of Fred Hoiberg has been his loyalty. Will that loyalty prevent a team from prying him from his home as the unofficial, official Mayor of Iowa?

Prying him away will be no easy feat, but could ultimately land a team like the Phoenix Suns a coach for the next decade that can reinvent the wheel of basketball bring them along in the rebuild that has only just begun.