

boise state coach history

Boise State Coach History: A Journey Through Leadership and Legacy

boise state coach history is a fascinating tale of determination, innovation, and the rise of a football program that transformed from a small college team into a nationally recognized powerhouse. The story of Boise State's coaches is not just about wins and losses; it's about the visionaries who shaped the Broncos' identity, instilled a winning culture, and helped elevate the program to prominence in college football. Whether you're a die-hard Broncos fan or simply intrigued by college football coaching dynasties, understanding the history of Boise State's coaching staff offers valuable insights into what it takes to build and sustain success.

The Early Years: Laying the Foundation

Boise State University's football program began in 1933, but it wasn't until decades later that the Broncos started gaining attention. During the initial years, the program was coached by several individuals who helped shape the basics of the team but didn't achieve significant national recognition. The early coaches worked in challenging conditions, often with limited resources and little national exposure.

First Notable Coaches

Some of the earliest coaches like Lyle Smith, who coached from 1947 to 1967, played a pivotal role in Boise State's foundational years. Smith, a former player himself, helped transition Boise State from a junior college to a four-year institution. Under his leadership, the Broncos won several conference titles and enjoyed a strong winning record. His tenure is often regarded as the formative era that set the stage for future success.

Smith's approach to coaching was grounded in discipline and developing local talent. His legacy is still remembered because he not only coached but also served as the athletic director, helping to modernize the program and facilities.

The Rise to National Prominence: The 1990s and Early 2000s

The 1990s marked a turning point in Boise State coach history. The Broncos began to emerge as a competitive force in the NCAA Division I-AA (now FCS), and coaching changes during this period reflected the program's growing

ambitions.

Skip Hall and Pokey Allen – Building Momentum

Skip Hall, who coached from 1987 to 1992, helped the Broncos transition into Division I-AA and led the team to playoff appearances, building momentum for the program's eventual rise. Following Hall, Pokey Allen took over and continued to enhance the Broncos' competitive edge. Allen's tenure was marked by an aggressive style of play and bringing a new level of excitement to Boise State football.

Despite battling health issues, Allen's leadership brought Boise State to national attention, especially with playoff appearances and strong seasons that hinted at bigger things to come.

Dan Hawkins: The Architect of Modern Success

The appointment of Dan Hawkins in 2001 marked a new era in Boise State coach history. Hawkins is often credited with transforming Boise State into a nationally recognized program. Under his guidance, the Broncos won multiple Western Athletic Conference (WAC) titles and started making appearances in major bowl games.

Hawkins introduced a high-powered offense and solid defense that became trademarks of Boise State football. His teams were known for their discipline, versatility, and ability to upset bigger programs—a trend that would become synonymous with Boise State in the years following.

The Chris Petersen Era: Elevating Boise State to the National Stage

If there is one name that dominates Boise State coach history, it's Chris Petersen. Taking over in 2006, Petersen elevated the Broncos from a strong mid-major program to a national powerhouse almost overnight.

Innovative Coaching and Memorable Victories

Petersen's coaching style combined innovation, meticulous preparation, and player development. He was a master at game planning and often outsmarted opponents with creative play-calling. Under his leadership, Boise State won multiple conference championships and famously defeated powerhouse teams in high-profile bowl games, including the iconic 2007 Fiesta Bowl win over

Oklahoma.

His tenure was marked not just by victories but by how the Broncos won—often as underdogs, with thrilling plays and last-minute heroics that captured the imagination of college football fans nationwide.

Legacy Beyond the Field

Beyond wins, Petersen helped raise the profile of Boise State football, attracting better recruits and increasing national media attention. His success helped the Broncos secure invitations to join the Mountain West Conference, a move that further solidified Boise State's status as a top-tier Group of Five program.

Petersen's impact extended off the field as well, influencing how mid-major programs approach coaching, recruitment, and game management.

Recent Years and Coaching Transitions

After Chris Petersen's departure in 2013, Boise State continued to navigate coaching changes with varying degrees of success, reflecting the challenges of sustaining high-level performance.