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SportsCenter
Feature Story

The past five years have seen the Hokies in the big dance. In 2018, the Hokies would make it further than any other Hokies team ever had in March Madness. One of the big reasons why that team was successful was a young man by the name of Ryan Nadeau.

Despite having experience with the Chicago Bulls, Coach Ryan Nadeau was never one to support the windy city teams. The Director of Player Personnel at Virginia Tech is a 'Detrouiter.' Thanks to the legendary Tom Izzo and the Michigan State Spartans basketball team, Nadeau was a student manager for the men's basketball team for three years. He received a degree in Economics from Michigan State in his time with the Spartans.

When he joined the Hokies staff back four years ago, Buzz Williams, the now-head coach at Texas A&M, was the head coach for the Hokies. While this year the Hokies ran out a lineup that featured Hunter Cattoor, Justyn Mutts, Storm Murphy, Keve Aluma, Darius Maddox amongst others.

Back in 2018 however, players that started on Tech consisted of Ty Outlaw, Wabissa Bede, Kerry Blackshear Jr, Justin Robinson, and Ahmed Hill. For all intents and purposes, this was the best basketball team Virginia Tech would deploy in its history. Tech would reach the Sweet 16 for its first time ever that season, with Nadeau playing a key role on the squad. Even with the incredible season, Williams aimed to move closer to home to be with family, and left Tech to join the Aggies of Texas A&M.

It didn't take long for the Hokies to find their replacement to Buzz. Head Coach Mike Young was brought aboard less than a month after March Madness, and his staff saw the value of keeping Nadeau in the fold.

Nadeau's roles with the team are many. These roles and jobs range from assisting with team budgeting, helping individual and team film sessions, working with the academic office to ensure students are on par academically, and much more. The players speak high praises of the fourth-year coach.

"He's a great coach." Virginia Tech guard Storm Murphy said with a grin. "He loves the game, he knows the game really well; his ability to develop players... help us feel good and feel confident in our game is awesome. It's amazing to work out with him, pinpoint little details within our game or through the game flow or what not... things to get better at. He sees things I don't see."

Justyn Mutts also spoke highly of Nadeau, but for an entirely different reason. Due to COVID and the NCAA's transfer policies, the situation didn't look good for Mutts. However, Justyn said Coach Nadeau helped in a big way. "I wasn't able to visit Blacksburg. I couldn't see the facilities. But what I was able to do was develop amazing relationships with the coaches through

phone calls, facetime... it was a blessing. I remember talking to coach out on the phone for hours at a time. Through that, when I got here, I just always felt like we got a great bond, a great relationship.”

It doesn't come as much of a surprise that Nadeau speaks as highly of his players as they speak of him. “His (Storm's) best quality is his Charisma.” Coach Nadeau would say. “In a sense, he has an ability to bring all his guys together. Our guys love being around him. He's a fifth-year guy who's been around a long time. He's seen a lot of basketball so his mind, and his charisma and his *spunk* almost... it brings the guys together.”

When asked about Justyn Mutts, it was more smiles. “He's got a relentless motor that just runs *nonstop*. As fans, you guys see it in the stadium. You guys feed off it, and it gets our team going. His energy man, it's contagious... it allows guys to rally around him. He always picks up the energy.

One of Nadeau's biggest moments came in Mike Young's first season in Blacksburg; when the unranked Hokies marched into the Maui Jim Invitational and upset the Michigan State Spartans 71-66, beating his alma mater just a handful of years since his graduated as a Student Manager for the very same squad.

Before he joined the Hokies though, Nadeau was a Basketball Operations Associate for two seasons with the Chicago Bulls. After gaining valuable experience in the NBA, Nadeau would remain in Blacksburg ever since. As far as indications go, at least, it doesn't appear that Nadeau is leaving the Hokie Nation anytime soon.



See “Meet Coach Ryan Nadeau” in header next to ‘Home’ Tab if video isn’t working! Video will link on Youtube!