



Dave Hammer

His love for Runnin' Utes basketball allowed him to become one of the area's best talent evaluators

By Bruce Smith

DAVE HAMMER CAN CLEARLY REMEMBER the one day that changed his life forever.

Since birth, and having grown up in Salt Lake City, Dave was a self-admitted die-hard Ute fan.

"I was so intrigued with the whole Ute basketball thing," he said. "I remember (former Ute basketball players) Billy McGill, Jerry Chambers, Ticky Burden. When I was a student, I used to go watch Chambers and Vranes practice."

In 1985, he went to Coach Lynn Archibald with a proposition.

"I wanted to help, and he gave me a great opportunity for no reason," he said. "I owe any success in basketball to Lynn giving me that opportunity. He was a great mentor and friend."

Today, Dave leads the nationally recognized Salt Lake Metro club basketball program, which has had more than 350 players play college basketball (150+ NCAA D-I) and have earned more than \$10 million in basketball scholarships.

But at that time, Dave's basketball resume was blank. He had no basketball experience, other than being a fan. For the next four years, he was a regular inside the school's Special Events Center doing whatever was asked at practices and games. He had the opportunity to coach Ute greats Manny Hendrix, Kelvin Upshaw, Mitch Smith, Boo Singletary, Tommy Connor, Walter Watts and Josh Grant.

"I was living the dream," Dave recalled. "I was part of the whole thing. My first year, we won the WAC, made the NCAA tournament and played in the national game of the night against (North Carolina coach) Dean Smith. It was awesome looking down to the other bench and seeing him on the other end."

Dave became great friends with Archibald, and Ute assistants like Trent Johnson, Larry Eustachy, Bob Burton, Doug Oliver and Norm Parrish, all of whom became head coaches.

"It was a great experience, but I also learned about the downsides of college basketball. It's tough watching friends get fired."

After his Utah experience ended, Dave began coaching his sons, David and Darrin (future Metro coaches), who had picked up Dave's basketball zeal. Using his recruiting and evaluation expertise, he also began helping Coach Parrish, who had taken over the Salt Lake Community College program. There, he recognized a noticeable void in Utah high school club basketball.

"Players weren't getting the opportunity to play in national tournaments," Dave said. "Only a few high school coaches did teams, usually with just their players."

In 1995, he formed Metro to fill that void.

"I set up five age groups from eighth to 12th grade," he said. "We organized them so we had a program, not just a team. Club basketball was really in its infancy. I enjoyed it. I had a unique blend of experience that I thought could help the kids."

In 2004, Dave formed the Salt Lake Metro girls basketball program and established a player development program. Dave is at every Metro practice and devotes equal time between his boys and girls programs. Dave also used his evaluation and organizational skills to form Intermountain Hoops, which runs events for the top players in the Intermountain West.

"Some of the guys I worked with are making millions and sometimes I wonder if I chose the right path. Being a dad and my family always came first. Basketball and helping kids have become my passion," he said. "Loyalty is huge with me and my players are basically an extended family from my perspective."

"I know some people may not respect Club basketball, but I believe it's what I'm supposed to do so I don't really worry about it. I truly believe I am meant to coach certain players and hopefully bring value to their lives and them to mine. It's kind of like a religious thing."



TOP RIGHT: Dave and his wife, Linda.

LOWER RIGHT: Magazine article touts Dave's Salt Lake Metro team's tournament win, and another celebrating the University of Utah's 1986 WAC title.

TOP LEFT: Three photos show Dave's game faces.

MIDDLE LEFT: Metro road trip with Dave, his son, David, and granddaughter, Hannah.

LOWER LEFT: Dave with his family, including Linda, and kids Maddie, Dave, Darrin and Allie.



Dave's dealings

* - **DAVE WAS A** volunteer assistant coach for the Utah men's basketball team (1985-89). Utah went 72-51 and had three postseason appearances. Assistant coach at SLCC (1992-2000) with record of 184-101. Dave has recruited nationally and has coached more than 150 college players.

* - **DAVE MET** his wife, Linda, at a Weinstock's store at Fashion Place Mall. Linda worked there and Dave saw her in the mall. "I bought her some flowers, gave them to her, got scared and walked away. I didn't even tell her my name. I called back a few weeks later. Best decision of my life and, definitely, my best signee ever."

* - **DAVE SAYS** he doesn't just teach basketball. "I'm always emphasizing fundamentals, toughness and work ethic because that's what makes kids succeed."



The Utes' coaching staff during the 1988-89 season: Trent Johnson, Larry Eustachy, Lynn Archibald, Greg Grant and Dave Hammer.

RUNNIN' UTE BASKETBALL 1986 WAC CHAMPS



1985-86 RESULTS (Overall: 20-10...WAC: 12-4)

Utah 89, Tennessee State 69	Utah 81, Utah State 56	Utah 78, Hawaii 63
Utah 80, Utah State 67	Utah 86, New Mexico 71	Utah 76, San Diego State 68
Utah 80, Colorado State 67	Utah 82, UT-El Paso 67	Utah 71, UT-El Paso 67
Utah 80, Cal Poly Pomona 66	Utah 80, San Diego State 66	Utah 82, New Mexico 66
Utah 80, Colorado State 66	Utah 80, Colorado State 66	Utah 84, Air Force 63
Utah 79, Colorado State 65	Utah 79, Wyoming 64	Utah 74, Brigham Young 61
Utah 80, Colorado State 64	Utah 80, Colorado State 64	Utah 80, Colorado State 64
Utah 80, Colorado State 64	Utah 80, Air Force 60	Utah 77, San Diego State 60
Utah 80, Colorado State 64	Utah 80, Brigham Young 57	Utah 82, North Carolina 57
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Salt Lake City flies past Phoenix Moon Valley in finals



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