

# SHAWNEE STATE

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## B E A R S



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Renowned College Football Coach Mark Snyder to Become First-Ever Head Coach of Shawnee State University's New Football Program**

During a press conference held today, Mark Snyder, a 37-year coaching veteran, was announced as the first-ever head coach of Shawnee State University's football program.

"Shawnee State is not only bringing NCAA college football to south central Ohio," SSU President Eric A. Braun said to the crowd gathered for the announcement. "Shawnee State is launching football with a highly accomplished leader who is one of us, who understands how much this means to us, and who shares our commitment to honoring the region's storied football history and has the experience to build a championship-quality program for the future."

SSU Athletics Director Gerald Cadogan said Shawnee State will begin football competition in NCAA Division II's Mountain East Conference in the fall of 2028.

"Mark Snyder is one of the most respected names in college football," Cadogan said. "He's the real deal and reflects the values and goals of SSU Athletics."

Snyder was head coach at Marshall University from 2005 to 2009. He was a part of Ohio State's coaching staff under Jim Tressel during OSU's national championship season in 2002 and has coached at Florida State, Michigan State, Texas A&M, Minnesota, and Youngstown State. In 2022, Snyder joined the United Football League, coaching the Houston Gamblers and Orlando Guardians.

“This is an opportunity for me to take everything I’ve learned and accomplished over my career and put it to work to build the best DII college football program from the ground up — and to do that right here where it all started for me,” said Snyder.

Snyder is a South Point, Ohio native, Ironton High School graduate, and honorary Kentucky Colonel. He began his football coaching career in 1988, shortly after graduating from Marshall University. He has been called one of the best defensive minds in college football and is author of the book “101 Defensive Line Drills” published in 2000. As Shawnee State Football’s first head coach, Snyder said he plans to build a winning competitive program from the start — while also building a community around SSU Athletics.

“We are going to chase excellence in every aspect of our lives,” Snyder said. “We are going to be excellent in the classroom and earn degrees. We are going to be excellent in the community and be selfless servants, just like this University has been from the beginning.”

Shawnee State University made the move from NAIA to NCAA Division II last month after being accepted as a two-year provisional member (2026-2028) before being eligible for full membership. During this time, Snyder and SSU will continue to hire staff, recruit students, and build facilities needed for its new football program. Construction to historic Spartan Stadium, once home to the Portsmouth Spartans, one of the original eight NFL teams, is slated to begin next spring.

“That’s a pretty strong foundation to build from,” Snyder said. “We plan to make this community proud.”

To follow SSU Football’s progress, visit [ssubears.com](http://ssubears.com).



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