

BOB KING



Credit for the lofty status of Lobo basketball today rests with one man – the 22nd inductee into the Sports Hall of Fame, BOB KING.

The 58-year-old coach, now an Albuquerque resident after eight years as athletic director-basketball coach at Indiana State University (1979-80 NCAA finalist), inherited a raggedy cage program here at UNM in 1962 and promptly turned it into a bonanza. He retired here after the 1971-72 season, and became assistant athletic director under Pete McDavid.

In 10 years as head Lobo skipper King's clubs compiled a 175-89 won/lost record for a .663 percentage – third best among UNM coaches boasting better than 50 wins. His products read like a 'Who's Who' in UNM basketball history – Ira Harge . . . Mel Daniels . . . Ron Nelson . . . Boo Ellis . . . Ben Monroe . . . Skip Kruzich . . . Claude Williams . . . Mike Lucero . . . Willie Long . . . Stretch Howard . . . Petie Gibson . . . Ron Becker . . . Tommy Roberts, to name a few.

Perhaps the greatest name of all came from Indiana State in 6'9 All-American and now Boston Celtic standout – Larry Bird. Sir Robert was unable to coach ISU in 1979-80, however, as a heart attack and later brain surgery forced him to relinquish the job to his assistant, Bill Hodges.

In Bob's 10 seasons at UNM, he coached his clubs to three appearances in the celebrated NIT in Madison Square Garden, reaching the finals in 1964 and the semis a year later. The 1967-68 (23-5) Lobos won the WAC and moved into the NCAA Western Regional here, losing to Santa Clara. His 23-6 1963-64 club shared the WAC crown with Arizona State.

Because of the hardcourt success that became 'Lobo Mania', the 7100-seat Johnson Gym facility couldn't hold the fans and then – 14,800-seat University Arena (The Pit) was built in 1966. The Pit couldn't hold 'em, so seating was increased by 2500 (17,300) in 1975 when King's assistant, Norm Ellenberger, was at the helm.

Bob is a University of Iowa graduate (1947), and holds a Masters from Drake (1957). His 12-year high school coaching record in Iowa and Illinois was 205-75 before joining Iowa's staff, later coming here.

Bob and his wife, Sharel, and their three children, Diane, Brad and Randy are getting settled in their new home in Albuquerque. Bob's two sons, Gary and Larry, living in Utah and Grady, N.M., and his daughter Chris, living in Las Cruces, hope to be at the banquet.

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