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Bearcats Name Jamelle Elliott Head Women's Basketball Coach

Former Connecticut player and assistant takes reigns of UC program

CINCINNATI — **Jamelle Elliott**, a former student-athlete and assistant coach at the University of Connecticut, has been named the University of Cincinnati's eighth head women's basketball coach.

"I can't express how excited and eager I am to start working with Mike Thomas and his wonderful staff at the University of Cincinnati," Elliott said. "I've had several great conversations with Mike and I share his vision for the Bearcats. His leadership skills and commitment to women's basketball are going to help us reach our potential."

Elliott has spent the better part of the last two decades with the Connecticut women's basketball program and Hall of Fame head coach Geno Auriemma, the last 12 years as an assistant coach. She has been a part of six national championships, including the Huskies' 2009 undefeated championship run, and won a title as a player, helping UConn to the 1995 championship, the first in the school's history.

"When we began this search, our goal was to find a champion to lead Bearcats women's basketball now and well into the future," Director of Athletics **Mike Thomas** said. "Someone who will merge the proud history of our program with a bold vision for the future, putting our student-athletes first while also elevating the program to the top of the BIG EAST. From the first time we met Jamelle Elliott we knew we had found the right fit."

Building on her success as a player for the Huskies, Elliott has helped guide UConn to a 402-36 (.918) record in her 12 years as an assistant coach, leading the team to seven NCAA Final Four berths during that span. In conference action, UConn has won the BIG EAST Conference regular season title in 10 of her 12 seasons, while also claiming a total of nine tournament crowns.

She has mentored some of the game's best post players, including all-Americans Swin Cash, Asjha Jones, Tamika Williams, 2009 Final Four Most Outstanding Player Tina Charles, and 2009 National Player of the Year Maya Moore.

"Jamelle is one of the rising coaching stars in women's basketball. Her foundation as a six-time NCAA champion as a student-athlete and coach at UConn makes her a perfect role model for our program," Thomas continued. "Jamelle is a tireless worker and a magnetic personality that will carry our program into places that we have never been before. The UC women's basketball head coach is one of the most visible positions in this region as far as women's sports goes, and has such a great deal of responsibility from a developmental perspective comes with the on-court part of the job. Jamelle is excited to fill this role and she will be a leader in our community and a favorite of anyone who meets her."

Elliott, a four-year letterwinner, helped build the UConn dynasty as a player and finished her career ranked No. 2 among UConn's all-time rebounding leaders (1,054), No. 5 in BIG EAST career rebounding (558), and No. 11 in UConn career scoring (1,387).

Elliott was only the second player in UConn history to surpass the 1,000-point and 1,000-rebound milestones when she ended her career. She is among the Connecticut career leaders for games played with 135, never missing a single game or practice in her four years. UConn posted an overall record of 117-18 (.867) during her career as a player.

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During her senior year, Elliott was honored by The UConn Club as its Outstanding Senior Athlete. She was also named the Most Outstanding Player at the *Hartford Courant* Connecticut Classic and was a member of the 1995 NCAA Mideast Regional All-Tournament Team.

After graduating from Connecticut with a degree in business management in 1996, Elliott went on to earn her graduate degree in sports management at UConn in 1997.

"I am extremely grateful to all my wonderful colleagues and friends at UConn who I will miss greatly. They have been such an important part of my life and have prepared me for this opportunity," Elliott added. "I am looking forward to coaching quality student-athletes who will become our society's next leaders, as well as engaging the entire campus community. It is a great honor to become a part of the Bearcat tradition and family. Together, we will build an exciting brand of basketball and championship people."

Elliott, a native of Washington, D.C., was named to the *Washington Post* all-Metro Team as well as being named Scholar-Athlete at H.D. Woodson High School.

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What they are saying about Jamelle Elliott...

"This is one of those days where you hope it would come, but you hope it wouldn't come for all the right reasons. This is the right time for Jamelle. She is more than ready to take on this challenge. There isn't an aspect of this job that she isn't prepared for. The kids will love her and the fans will love how hard her kids will work and the style of play. There is a lot of sadness in Storrs, Connecticut, today, but a lot of joy for Jamelle personally for her getting this opportunity. I don't know that I've been around a better coach."

- Geno Auriemma, UConn head coach

"I am thrilled for Jamelle and think this is a fantastic hire for Cincinnati. I played with her for three years and we learned from the best in Coach Auriemma. I could see even then that she had the passion and fire that lends itself to being a great head coach. My litmus test, now that I have kids, is would I want my daughter to play for this head coach and when it comes to Jamelle, the answer is a resounding yes."

- Rebecca Lobo, former teammate and current ESPN women's basketball analyst

"Cincinnati could not have chosen a better person to head their women's basketball program. Jamelle has six national championships, one as a player and five as a coach. Not many people have that type of resume. She knows how to win and will have a positive impact on the Bearcats players. She is a dear friend and I'm proud that she is about to embark on this new chapter in her life."

- Tonya Cardoza, Temple head coach

"Jamelle understands the game and knows what it takes to win at a high level, but more than that, she is a wonderful person who helped me both on and off the court during my time at Connecticut. She helped so many young women develop personally and that is an attribute she will bring to Cincinnati. UC is getting a real winner with the hiring of Jamelle."

- Swin Cash, member of WNBA's Seattle Storm

"Jamelle Elliott defines the meaning of success. From an undersized post player from the D.C. area to leading young women to multiple championships, she has made her mark as an assistant coach. She is loyal, responsible, battle-tested, and an all around great person. It is time for her to be a head coach. The world is hers."

- Tamika Williams-Raymond, Kansas assistant coach

"Jamelle Elliott is an extraordinary talent who will provide great energy for the University of Cincinnati. She is going to be a tremendous recruiter and will engage the campus and the people around the program. She has worked under one of the best coaches in women's basketball and has had a lot to do with that program's success and I know she will bring those same talents to Cincinnati. This is truly a great hire."

- Floyd Keith, Executive Director of Black Coaches Association

"Coach Elliott has a knack of getting you to do things you didn't think you could do. She had a lot of confidence in me and works really hard to bring the confidence out in her players. She takes things personally and has strong relationships with all of her players."

- Tina Charles, Connecticut center and 2009 Final Four Most Outstanding Player