



JOHN CUNNINGHAM

DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS

John Cunningham was named the Director of Athletics at the University of Cincinnati in December 2019.

Since 2014, Cunningham has overseen the external operations at three NCAA Division I institutions, Boise State, Syracuse and Minnesota and has served as a sport administrator for bowl teams, conference-championship teams and NCAA Tournament teams.

Most recently, Cunningham served as Minnesota's Deputy Athletics Director for Administration from 2016-19, overseeing the day-to-day administrative operations of the department, working with all 25 Gopher programs and external units, as well as serving as sport administrator for football, men's basketball and men's golf.

He was part of the fundraising and implementation of the Gophers' Athletes Village, a privately-funded project of \$166-million which added more than 338,000 square feet of new academic, leadership, nutrition, practice and team support space for all sports. The Athletes Village marked the first significant additions to the everyday facilities Gopher student-athletes use to study and train in more than 30 years.

Other student-athlete centric initiatives which occurred under Cunningham's leadership were a significant increase in the focus on student-athlete mental health, improvements to team training tables and nutrition along with enhancements to team travel experiences.

Cunningham was instrumental in Minnesota's search for its most recent football head coach, PJ Fleck, played a key role in Fleck's recent long-term extension and oversaw a highly successful external unit which achieved increases in attendance and fundraising from 2016-19.

The Gophers 2019 football attendance averaged 46,190, its highest in four years while attendance at men's basketball games has averaged 11,738 so far this season, the highest number in three years.

Overall, football attendance increased by 22 percent from 2016-19 and men's basketball attendance had a 15-percent jump during the same time period.

Philanthropic support increased each fiscal year over Cunningham's three-year tenure, with giving to Gopher Athletics totaling over \$35-million in FY19. As part of Minnesota's \$190-million Nothing Short of Greatness campaign, Gopher Athletics secured over \$38-million in capital gifts in the past three years.

In addition to Athletes Village, which opened in 2018, fundraising was completed for new or renovated facilities in men's and women's golf, hockey, volleyball and wrestling.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT JOHN CUNNINGHAM

"John Cunningham's leadership and range of experience will be great assets as we build on the success of our student-athletes and our programs' competitiveness. He is the right leader at the right time to lead our Bearcats into the future." - **UC President Dr. Neville Pinto**

"John is a proven administrator with great humility. His commitment to integrity and his strong advocacy for student-athletes and coaches is present in every decision he makes. There is no doubt he, his wife Caitlin, and their two sons, will do everything they can to build upon the athletic excellence at the University of Cincinnati." - **Minnesota AD Mark Coyle**

"John is an elite man, husband and father who will do an amazing job at Cincinnati. He is a fantastic listener, but is also forward thinking and is always looking for ways to improve the student-athlete experience. This is a home-run hire for the Bearcats." - **Minnesota Football Head Coach PJ Fleck**

On the field, Minnesota won 15 Big Ten Conference titles in nine different programs from 2016-19. Minnesota finished 20th in the 2019 Learfield Directors' Cup race, which measures broad-based success across all programs, putting the Gophers top seven percent of all NCAA Division I athletics departments.

Cunningham joined the Minnesota staff from Syracuse, where he also served as the Deputy Athletics Director for Administration from 2015-16.

Prior to his tenure at Syracuse, Cunningham worked at Boise State University from 2011-2014 as the senior associate athletics director for external relations and executive director for NCAA Compliance.

At BSU, Cunningham was promoted to senior associate athletics director for external relations in 2014 after leading the NCAA Compliance program for three years. As the head of external relations, Cunningham led the operations of Boise State's development, marketing, media relations and ticket offices. He was also the sport administrator for men's basketball, men's and women's golf, and men's tennis.

Prior to his appointment at BSU, Cunningham worked at Texas Christian University for five years in the compliance field. He was hired by the Horned Frogs in 2006 as the assistant director of compliance and followed up a year later with a promotion to director of compliance. In 2011, he was promoted again to assistant athletics director for compliance. In that position, he was responsible for a comprehensive rules education program and provided rules interpretations for athletics staff, coaches, student-athletes and university officials.

Cunningham started his career in collegiate athletics as the compliance coordinator at the University of Maryland, where he was responsible for providing rules interpretations, tracking initial, and continuing and transfer eligibility of more than 700 student-athletes. While in law school, he was a compliance intern at Maryland for two summers.

A 2001 TCU graduate, Cunningham received a law degree from the University of Nebraska's College of Law in 2005.

Cunningham and his wife, Caitlin, have two sons, Gus and Hank.

"Cincinnati could not have made a better hire as its new athletic director. John is an outstanding administrator and has all of the skills to help elevate their athletic department. I wish him continued success and appreciate all he has done for me and our basketball program." - **Minnesota Men's Basketball Head Coach Richard Pitino**

"John and I spent about a year together at Syracuse, and I was always impressed by him. It was evident back then that he had all the skill sets to be an Athletic Director, and I have no doubt he will do a tremendous job at Cincinnati. John is a man of great character who always puts the student-athlete first. I look forward to seeing what he can accomplish with the Bearcats." - **Syracuse Men's Basketball Head Coach Jim Boeheim**