

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI Welcomes Three New Full-Time Coaches To Athletics Program

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The University of the Virgin Islands Athletics Program welcomed three new full-time coaches on Monday, June 19, at a press conference held in the Sports and Fitness Center on the St. Thomas Campus, the institution of higher learning announced Monday. The new hires include men's Basketball Coach Jeff Jones, Women's basketball Coach Reggie Carrick and women and men's Soccer Coach Charles Long. All officially joined the UVI family this summer.

“This is an historic day for the University of the Virgin Islands athletics,” said UVI President David Hall. “It is historic because we have made a decision to move towards having full-time coaches.” These coaches come with a wealth of experience and an understanding that our mission is not just to win games, although that is important, but also to help to develop and nurture people, and that is critical to this University.”

“The hiring of these experienced and impressive coaches represents a major change and opportunity for growth for our athletic program,” Dr. Hall continued. “Under the overall leadership of Athletic Director Wilberto Ramos, these coaches will ensure that UVI is more competitive, exciting and compelling in men’s and women’s basketball and soccer. Our athletic future just got brighter.”

“Athletics can be an important aspect of university life – for the athletes, and also for school spirit,” said Dr. Camille McKayle, UVI provost and vice president of Academic Affairs. “We are looking forward to building on our base to enhance athletics on both campuses.”

Coach Jones comes to UVI from Carver College in Atlanta, Ga. He has 23 years of college experience, has had four-time National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) National Tournament appearances, final-four rank top-seven in the NAIA and two-conference championship. As an assistant coach, Jones won the NCAA Division II National Tournament. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication with a minor in recreation from Pittsburg State University.

“Our goal is to bring in a team that is very global that cannot only represent the Virgin Islands but represent worldwide,” said Coach Jones. “We are looking for young men that will fit this institution academically, socially and athletically.”

Jones said that his number one goal is that these are student athletes, and they are here to graduate; basketball is second. “Second thing, we are here to win a national championship,” he said. “We are going to work hard to bring a national championship to UVI.”

“Third thing, we must give to others,” he said. “We must work in the community. We must volunteer our time at elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, non-profits, housing authority – whatever needs to be done in the community.”

Coach Reggie Carrick, who could not attend Monday’s press conference, comes to the University from Olds College in Alberta, Canada. Carrick ended his sixth season with the Olds College women’s basketball team in 2016. In his 12 years as college and university head coach, he has 12 All-Conference selection and was named the 2004 Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC) Men’s Coach of the year. He holds the 2007 U.S. National Record for turnarounds going from one win and 23 losses to 24 wins and nine losses. This is a standing record for four year colleges of any level in women’s basketball. Coach Carrick has a Master of Education from Delta State University and a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Augustana University.

Coach Long comes to UVI from Garden City Community College, Kansas, where he served as Head Men’s and Women’s Soccer Coach. He has more than 16 years’ experience in coaching men and women’s soccer teams at universities and colleges. At

Talladega College, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in the NAIA, Long turned the program around from 1-16 to 15 -5 into a winning program and was recruited to start a women's soccer program.

"Coach Long will bring to the University the necessary skills that will allow all students to become athletically inclined based on his experience," UVI Athletic Director Wilberto Ramos said. "His knowledge and experience on college education and coaching surpasses our expectations and I believe that with his creative ideas we can strategically enhance our department on both campuses."

Long said that his goal is to recruit quality student athletes that can make a difference on campus. He is working on recruiting juniors for the Territory to encourage them to attend UVI. His plans are to have a full schedule of games on St. Croix and hopes to have a few games on the St. Thomas Campus as well. "I look forward to building a program here," said Coach Long.

Long is primarily responsible for the men's and women's soccer programs, which compete in the Liga Atlética Interuniversitaria (LAI) league and NAIA. He will assist in recruitment, and building teams, coordinating team development, and preparing UVI for the next level of competition. The coach will also help with coordinating sports tournaments throughout the academic school year. As an instructor of Health and Physical Education, the position will provide teaching in health and physical education that are part of the general education requirement for all students.

"Part of our commitment is hiring coaches who are full-time members of the University community, as faculty or as members of the athletics staff," said Dr. McKayle. "Our students-athletes will benefit, and this is just the beginning. We hope that the entire Virgin Islands community will rally behind our UVI Buccaneers by coming to the games and encouraging our athletes."

In the 2017-2018 season, UVI will have six programs representing six sports for men and women's teams: basketball, soccer, cross country, track and field, weightlifting, golf and beach volleyball. Ramos said teams with both genders will be created when developing new teams. "I think that is something that we need to have participation from both genders in the Athletic Department," Ramos said.

The University will increase the amount of games held at UVI, he said. One of the main goals is to enhance and improve the experience for not just the student athlete but the entire student population at UVI. With more home games we will have more activities where the students can be part of the game.

UVI's first men's basketball game will be the UVI Classic on Oct. 27. There will also be games on Oct. 28 and 29. "We would like to see this gym full to capacity," Jones said.

He said that one of the goals of the Athletic Program is to serve the community. Basketball camps have been planned on Aug. 3-5, at the Educational Complex on St. Croix and Aug. 10-12, in the Sports and Fitness Center on the St. Thomas Campus. Both camps will be held from 8 a.m. to noon.

Feature Image: UVI Provost Dr. Camille McKayle, UVI President David Hall, Basketball Coach Jeff Jones , Athletic Director Wilberto Ramos, UVI Soccer Coach Charles Long,

and Track and Field Coach Dale Joseph pose for a photo. © Aisha-Zakiya Boyd

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