

Former KU assistant Robinson announces retirement

By Henry Greenstein
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Arizona assistant men's basketball coach Steve Robinson, who spent eight seasons at KU in two separate stints working under Roy Williams, announced his retirement on Thursday.

"After more than 40 years of coaching and mentoring young men from around the world, I feel it is the right time for me to step away and spend more time with my wife, our kids and our grandkids," Robinson said in a press release. "Coaching has been my passion from the day that I started and I want to thank each and every former player, coach or manager for the impact they have made on my life. There are so many lifelong friendships and memories that



Rick Scuteri/AP Photo

ARIZONA ASSISTANT COACH STEVE ROBINSON during the first half of a game against BYU on Feb. 22 in Tucson, Ariz.

my family has been able to take away from college basketball, I could never begin to list them all."

Robinson left Cornell to join Williams at KU in 1988 for his first season at the helm. He became part of several of the Jayhawks' most successful seasons of the era, including the

1990-91 team that lost to Duke in the title game in Indianapolis and the 1992-93 squad that reached the Final Four in New Orleans.

Robinson then received head coaching opportunities at Tulsa for two seasons, where he immediately preceded Bill Self, and then Florida State for

five years with one NCAA
Tournament appearance.

He briefly returned to Lawrence for what turned out to be Williams' final year at the helm of the program — the 2002-03 season that ended with another loss in the title game, 81-78 to Syracuse, again in New Orleans — and was one of the assistants who left with Williams as he returned to North Carolina in April 2003.

Robinson then spent the following 18 seasons — by far the longest single stint of his 42-year coaching career — assisting Williams with the Tar Heels, working in scouting and recruiting and with the UNC guards, and winning three national titles along the way. He was inducted into the A Step Up Assistant Coaches Hall of Fame in 2019.

After Williams' retirement, Robinson moved to Arizona for his final four seasons, even making a return to Allen Fieldhouse in March.

"We are grateful that Coach Robinson and his family took the chance on me and moved to Tucson to help a first-time head coach," Arizona coach Tommy Lloyd said in the release. "From the first day, he brought a wealth of knowledge and experience that few coaches in the country have. His remarkable career has spanned four decades and some of the best basketball players in the game, which speaks to him as a person and a coach."

A native of Roanoke, Virginia, Robinson attended Ferrum College and then Radford, where he started his coaching career in 1983.

Bray

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The junior is the second transfer KU has added at that position, after Leroy Harris III from Chattanooga, and fourth overall this spring, given that the Jayhawks have also recently secured commitments from cornerback Syeed Gibbs (Georgia Tech) on Thursday and offensive tackle Enrique Cruz Jr. (Syracuse) on Friday.

Given his size, Bray will have a solid opportunity to compete for playing time at strong-side defensive end behind Texas transfer Justice Finkley, whereas Harris most likely provides another option on the weak side to go with starter Dean Miller, after fellow edge rusher Bai Jobe became the only player to leave KU during the spring portal window.

NFL

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Dominick Puni, another tackle at KU who previously started opposite Cabeldue and then moved to guard in the pros, went in the third round to the San Francisco 49ers in the 2024 draft and became one of the top rookie linemen in the NFL.

Prior to Saturday, the Seahawks had not selected a Kansas football player since quarterback Frank Seurer in the 1984 supplemental draft of players from the United States and Canadian football leagues; their last KU pick in the NFL Draft proper was linebacker Terry Beeson in 1977.

Former Jayhawks Logan Brown, Cobee Bryant and Mello Dotson were potential picks who now have an opportunity, along with Luke Grimm and Quentin Skinner, to be signed as free agents.



Chuck Burton/AP File Photo

KANSAS RUNNING BACK DEVIN NEAL (4) celebrates a touchdown against Texas with teammate Bryce Cabeldue (77) on Nov. 13, 2021, in Austin, Texas. Both players were drafted into the NFL on Saturday.

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