

Smith out as HPU head coach

BY GREER SMITH
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HIGH POINT — Departing a press conference following a 72-70 Big South tournament first-round loss to Charleston Southern on Wednesday, G.G. Smith made his last public exit as High Point University's basketball coach after a season and six games.

The school announced Friday that it and Smith had parted ways by mutual agreement after a campaign that started with a promising 8-1 start then crumbled to a 14-17 final record that included a 6-12 mark and an eighth-place finish in the Big South. Adding a 3-3 mark over the final six games of the 2021-22 season, Smith finished with

a 17-20 mark.

"I would like to thank G.G. Smith for his leadership and commitment to our men's basketball program and the High Point community over the last five years," athletics director Dan Hauser said.

The school said a search for a new coach has begun and would have no other comment until Smith's replacement is hired.

Smith was promoted from associate head coach to head coach with six games left in the 2021-22 season after his

father, Tubby Smith, stepped down after a second bout with COVID-19. A university release announcing the change said G.G. Smith would take over as head coach through the 2022-23 season.

G.G. Smith came to HPU as an assistant coach after his father was hired prior to the 2018-19 season. The Panthers went a combined 53-87 with the Smiths as head coaches, with just winning season, a 16-15 mark in Tubby Smith's first year.

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High Point University coach G.G. Smith directs Zack Austin during a game Saturday, Jan. 14, against Presbyterian in the Qubein Center.

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SMITH

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The 8-1 start this season was the best nine-game mark for HPU in

the Division I era. The Panthers then lost 12 of 14 during a stretch in which their top two scorers, Jaden House and Zack Austin battled injuries. The slide included a 2-9 start

in the Big South that hit bottom with a 106-69 loss at Charleston Southern that set a record for most points surrendered to a Big South opponent. They finished 4-4 and at times

resembled the team that got off to the hot start.

Before his time at HPU, G.G. Smith's only other head coaching stint came at Loyola-Maryland, where he went

56-98 in five seasons Loyola-Maryland with no winning campaigns.

Smith's tenure is the shortest for a HPU men's head basketball coach since J.D. Barnett lasted just the 1971-72 season,

posting a 13-16 mark.

A university spokesman said in an email that all of Smith's assistant coaches — Eric Gabriel, Keith Gatlin and Linc Darner — are also out.