

Smith, Dean (1931-) Encyclopedia Article

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North Carolina's Dean Smith retired after the 1997 season as the all-time winningest head coach in college basketball. Smith's 879 wins over 36 years surpassed legendary Kentucky coach Adolph Rupp by three games. For twenty-seven consecutive years, Smith's squads won 20 or more games, and they captured two national titles along the way.

Smith coached some of the games best players during years at North Carolina, including Billy Cunningham, James Worthy, Mitch Kupchak, and Michael Jordan. Smith also saw many of his assistant coaches go on to become head coaches, including Roy Williams and Larry Brown. But the achievement of which Smith is most proud is that fact that 97 percent of his players graduated with a degree. In the 1980s and 1990s, as college hoops came to seem ever more glamorous under the bright lights of increasing television coverage, Smith represented the finest values of amateur athleticism.

Further Reading:

Chansky, Art, with Michael Jordan. *The Dean's List: A Celebration of Tar Heel Basketball and Dean Smith*. New York, Warner Books, 1997.

Wolff, Alexander. "Fanfare for an Uncommon Man." *Sports Illustrated*. December 22, 1997, 32-43.

———. "Dean Smith Unplugged." *Sports Illustrated*. December 22, 1997, 50-55.

Wulf, Steve. "Tears for the Tar Heels: North Carolina Coach Dean Smith Takes Himself Out of the Game for Which He Has Done So Much." *Time*. October 20, 1997, 93.