

Brian Wardle, Bradley University



Brian Wardle recently completed his 10th season as Bradley University men's basketball coach, his Braves posting a 28-9 overall record, a 15-5 finish in the Missouri Valley Conference, a runner-up finish in the MVC Tournament and a spot in the quarterfinals of the NIT.

He has a career mark of 281-212 in 15 seasons as a college head coach. That includes a 186-147 ledger during his tenure at Bradley and a 95-65 slate in five seasons at Wisconsin-Green Bay.

At Bradley, Wardle has built the Braves into a perennial MVC contender, capped by winning back-to-back MVC Tournament championships in 2019 and 2020. In the 2022-23 season, Wardle guided the Braves to their first MVC regular-season title since 1996 and was named the 2023 MVC Coach of the Year. Under Brian Wardle, Bradley also has recorded 53 all-MVC selections (first team, second team, third team, defensive team, freshman team, etc.).

Named the school's 14th head coach in March 2015, Wardle was first tasked with turning around a Bradley program that had not posted a winning conference record in the previous six seasons with the Braves finishing last in the Valley the year before his arrival. After a 5-27 finish in 2015-16, his squad improved to 13-20 in 2016-17 and leapt forward to 20-13 in 2017-18 – the school's first 20-win campaign in nine years.

After three seasons reconstructing the Bradley roster, it all paid off in Wardle's fourth and fifth seasons – 2018-19 ended at 20-15, the program's first MVC Tournament title in 31 years and an NCAA Tournament berth, while 2019-20 resulted in a 23-11 effort, a second consecutive MVC Tournament title what would have been another NCAA Tournament appearance if not for COVID-19.

Bradley has continued to thrive under Wardle's leadership since the championship runs. After a sub-par 12-16 finish in 2020-21, the Braves followed with a 17-14 mark in 2021-22, a 25-10 ledger and MVC regular-season crown in 2022-23 and a 23-12 record in 2023-24.

Prior to taking over the Braves' program in 2015, Wardle compiled a 95-65 record at Green Bay, a five-year run that culminated with consecutive 24-win seasons and three-straight postseason appearances. The 2014 Horizon League Coach of the Year, Wardle led the Phoenix to a 24-7 mark in 2013-14, including a 14-2 league record to claim the regular-season conference title and an automatic bid to the NIT. His team went 24-9 and earned another NIT bid in 2014-15.

The youngest head coach in Division I when he took over the Phoenix, Wardle's Green Bay teams averaged 19 wins per season while facing stiff competition. While with Green Bay, his teams produced a two-time Horizon League Player of the Year (Keifer Sykes), an HL Defensive Player of the Year (Alec Brown), an NBA Draft choice (Brown) and another NBA player (Sykes). Following the 2013-14 season, Wardle was named Skip Prosser Man of the Year, an award that recognizes a coach for success on the court and for displaying moral integrity off the court.

A native of Willowbrook, Ill., Wardle was a two-time all-state selection at Hinsdale Central High School, where he ranks as the school's all-time leading scorer and rebounder. He went on to play collegiately at Marquette, helping the Golden Eagles to NIT appearances in 1998 and 2000. As a senior in 2001, Wardle served as team captain and finished as the second-leading scorer in Conference USA at 18.8 points per game.

After graduating from Marquette in 2001 with a bachelor's degree in communication studies, Wardle played professionally for two seasons in the NBA Development League and Continental Basketball Association. Wardle began his coaching career as director of operations at Marquette from 2003-05, then served as a Green Bay assistant coach from 2005-10 before being named Phoenix head coach on April 15, 2010.

Wardle and his wife, Lecia, have three children – daughters Mya and Emery, and son, Davin.