

Danny Miles (1945–)

By Barbara Ditman

Daniel Joseph Miles was head coach of the men's basketball team at the Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls for his entire forty-five-year career as a head coach. He led the Hustlin' Owls to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Division II National Tournament seventeen times, winning the national titles in 2004, 2008, and 2012. His teams claimed twenty-three regular-season conference and conference tournament championships. Miles finished his career with 1,040 victories, the fourth-highest total among all NCAA and NAIA head coaches.

Danny Miles was born in Medford on October 9, 1945. He was recognized as the outstanding athlete at Medford High School in 1963 and was awarded a baseball scholarship to Oregon State University. Because of an off-season injury, he transferred to Southern Oregon College (now Southern Oregon University), where he set college football's all-time passing record (All Divisions) in 1965, a record that remains unbroken. He led the NAIA in total offense in 1965 and set the national record for total offense in college football. He was the last SOU athlete to play in three sports.

After graduating from SOU with a degree in health and physical education, Miles began coaching football, basketball, and baseball at Mazama High School in Klamath Falls. He was head baseball coach at Bend High School before returning to Klamath Falls in 1970 as assistant coach in football, basketball, and baseball at Oregon Tech. The next year, he was named head coach for basketball and baseball and offensive coordinator for football. Under Miles's direction, the Oregon Tech basketball program became successful enough to compete at the national level, and he decided to concentrate on basketball.

Miles's teams were widely recognized as much for their scholarship and character as for their hustle and stamina, and they participated in community enrichment and service programs. Being an "Oregon Tech guy," Miles said, is an honor that signifies hustle, sportsmanship, and selflessness mixed with maximum effort, intensity, and enthusiasm. He believes that basketball teaches many lessons, including how to handle failure and come back stronger for it; the importance of earning respect from teammates, coaches, and opponents; and how to accept responsibility for success and failure.

Miles received many honors, including the NAIA Division II National Basketball Coach of the Year Award in 2004 and 2008 and the National Association of Basketball Coaches Coach of the Year in 2012. He received the A.T. Slats Gill All-Sports Coach of the Year award in 2004, the NAIA Champion of Character for All Sports award in 2009, the NABC Guardians of the Game Pillar Award for Advocacy in 2013, and the John Wooden Keys to Life award from Athletes in Action in 2015. Other honors include Conference All-Sport Coach of the Year (four times), Conference Coach of the Year (ten times), Northwest Coach of the Year (twice), and West Coast Coach of the Year.

After winning his 500th basketball game in 1996, the Oregon Tech gymnasium was renamed Danny Miles Court. He was named to the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame and the NAIA Sports Hall of Fame, and in 2018 Miles became the third small-college coach to be inducted into the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame. He was inducted into the Small College Basketball Hall of Fame in October 2019.

Miles retired from Oregon Tech in July 2016 after being diagnosed with cancer. To honor him, a list of more than three hundred names of his former players was placed under the Owl's banner on the wall in Danny Miles Court. In 2016, he began working at Cascade Christian High School in Medford in 2016, where he mentored their coaches and counseled students. After a career of fifty-one years in education, he retired on June 7, 2019.

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