

## Tech hires ex-Centenary coach Montgomery as head softball coach

Written by Staff Reports

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RUSTON – Louisiana Tech Athletics Director Bruce Van De Velde announced Monday that the University has hired former Centenary and current Northern Colorado coach Mark Montgomery as the head softball coach for the Lady Techster program.

Montgomery replaces Sarah Dawson, who resigned in August to accept a position at North Carolina-Greensboro.

“I am very honored to have been chosen as the head softball coach at Louisiana Tech University,” said Montgomery. “I would like to thank Athletic Director Bruce Van De Velde and Senior Woman’s Administrator Mary Kay Hungate for this opportunity. What an exciting time to be joining the Louisiana Tech family.

“I am very familiar with the pride and passion of Louisiana Tech Athletics, specifically of that which surrounds the softball program and its rich history. It is my desire to continue the growth of the program and to strive to create a level of excellence that will live up to some of the great accomplishments of the past.”

Montgomery boasts 12 years of collegiate head coaching experience – 10 on the Division I level – after spending two years at NAIA Georgetown (Kent.) College, eight years at Centenary College and the past two years at North Colorado. He has won 330 career games on the college level.

The Kentucky native has led his teams to seven winning seasons during those 12 years, including seven seasons of 30 or more wins, while guiding Centenary to a pair of NCAA Tournament appearances in 2004 and 2005. During his time at Centenary (2003-2010), Montgomery won 216 games, including victories over Florida, Auburn, Arkansas, Minnesota, Syracuse, Boston College and New Mexico.

“We are excited to have Mark Montgomery lead our softball program,” Van De Velde said.

“Mark has been the head coach of two Division I programs that have competed successfully at the highest level of NCAA competition. Mark has demonstrated that he cares deeply about the personal and academic development of student athletes.

“As we prepare to join Conference USA, it is a priority for all of our programs to remain committed to competitive excellence. We believe Coach Montgomery will raise the overall success level of our softball program and will work tirelessly to promote the sport in the community and around the state. He has a great background and strong relationships with local high school programs and travel ball teams which will help with recruiting.”

Montgomery led the Ladies to the program’s first winning season in 13 years in 2004 and a program record-tying 36 victories as Centenary captured the Mid-Continent Conference Tournament championship and advanced to the school’s first ever NCAA Tournament.

Centenary led top-ranked Arizona late in the game before eventually falling 2-1 to the Wildcats. The following season saw Montgomery and the Ladies win 31 games, capture their second straight Mid-Continent Tournament title and return to the NCAA Tournament. One six-year stretch in Shreveport saw Centenary win 30 or more games five times.

During his time at Centenary, Montgomery coached 23 all-conference players, two conference newcomers of the year, one conference pitcher of the year, two conference tournament MVPs and several conference all-tournament players.

Following Centenary’s decision to drop down to Division III, Montgomery accepted the head coaching position at Northern Colorado where he led the program to back-to-back second place finishes in the Pacific Coast Softball Conference Mountain Division (2nd place) each season

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while being named the PCSC Mountain Division Coach of the Year in 2011. The 2012 team won a school record 25 games and broke 21 school records, including wins, batting average and extra base hits.

“While we have enjoyed our time at Northern Colorado, and are saddened to say goodbye to so many great people, players, and friends, we are also so very excited to be coming back to Louisiana,” Montgomery said. “My family and I loved our time in the region and know what a treasure the north Louisiana area is. It feels as though we’re coming home.

“Louisiana Tech and the Ruston community are such special places, and it is my goal to get Louisiana Tech softball back to a national level of distinction.”

Montgomery’s teams have also been highly successful away from the softball diamond as each one of them has registered a team grade point average above 3.0 for the past 10 years. His 2001 team at Georgetown College posted a cumulative GPA that ranked in the top 10 of the National Fastpitch Coaches Association All-Academic Teams.

Prior to his collegiate coaching experience, Montgomery served as the softball coach at Lafayette (Kent.) High School where he won seven district titles, five regional titles and one state championship title while posting a 170-73 record.

He earned his bachelor’s degree from Eastern Kentucky in 1992 and his master’s degree from Georgetown College in 2000.

Montgomery and his wife Melanie have three daughters: Bailey, Emma and Adrienne.