

# SportsReport

## New Game Plan

*Veteran coach Greg Robinson aims to take SU football to new heights*

Courtesy of SU Athletics

The Syracuse University football program kicked off the new year with the goal of returning to national prominence under the leadership of new head football coach Greg Robinson, a 30-year veteran of the NFL and collegiate coaching ranks. “Greg Robinson is the perfect choice for Syracuse University,” said athletic director Daryl Gross, introducing Robinson as SU’s 27th head coach at a January 11 press conference. “He brings so many brilliant ingredients to his whole [coaching] scheme and he has done so many wonderful things.”

Robinson arrived in Syracuse after serving as co-defensive coordinator last season with the University of Texas, which finished 11-1, including a Rose Bowl victory. After spending 14 years in the NFL—most recently as defensive coordinator with the Kansas City Chiefs (2001-03)—Robinson said returning to the college level at Texas reminded him how much he loved coaching college football. SU is his first job as a head coach and fulfills a lifelong ambition. “I really never had any dreams of being a professional coach,” he said. “It was always to be a college head coach. So, it’s been a long time coming.”

A Los Angeles native, Robinson played football and studied political science at the University of Pacific, where he forged a lifelong friendship with teammate Pete Carroll, who recently won his second straight national championship as head coach at the University of Southern California (USC). The two broke into the coaching ranks together in 1975 as gradu-

ate assistants at their alma mater, and crossed career paths several times, serving together at North Carolina State (1980-82) and with the New York Jets (1990-94). Robinson joined the Jets as a defensive line coach after serving as an assistant coach and offensive coordinator at UCLA from 1982-89. He became the Jets’ defensive coordinator in 1994, when Carroll took over the New York club as head coach. And it was Gross who, as a USC athletic administrator, recruited Carroll to coach the Trojans in 2000. “I know how strongly Pete feels about Daryl’s support,” Robinson said. “Obviously, they’ve been very successful together. And I’d like to believe that Daryl and I can do the same thing here at Syracuse.”

Before selecting Robinson, Gross conducted an extensive national search, saying he wanted a defensive-minded coach with both NFL and college experience. In addition to the Carroll connection, Robinson and Gross worked together for the Jets, where Gross was a scout. “We wanted someone special,” said Gross, whose goal is to see the Orange anchor the Big East and contend for the national title. “You will see it on the football field.”

The most prominent credential on Robinson’s coaching resume is a six-year tenure with the Denver Broncos (1995-2000). As defensive coordinator, he built a punishing defensive unit that helped the Broncos capture back-to-back Super Bowl titles in 1997 and 1998. The team ranked in the NFL’s top 10

in total defense during three of Robinson’s six seasons there—and his defensive strategies were copied throughout the league. “He comes in here with two Super Bowl rings and with four Rose Bowl championships,” Gross said. “He is 8-0 in the post-season. He has a lot of experience.”

Robinson takes over for Paul Pasqualoni, who guided the Orange for 14 seasons and compiled a 107-59-1 record, placing him second on SU’s all-time coaching wins list behind the legendary Ben Schwartzwalder. In deciding to replace Pasqualoni, Gross cited inconsistent play over the past few years and his desire to see the program head in a new direction. “Let me say this about Paul Pasqualoni, he is a class act,” Gross said. “He has great character and is a tremendous man. From a coach’s perspective, you can marvel at the things he has done.”

Pasqualoni, who was named an assistant with the Dallas Cowboys in late January, joined the SU football staff in 1987 as linebacker coach for head coach Dick MacPherson. He was named head coach in 1991, when MacPherson took the helm of the New England Patriots. The winningest first-year coach in SU history, Pasqualoni posted a 10-2 mark in 1991. During his tenure on the Hill, the Orange had three 10-win seasons, won the Big East outright twice, and shared the conference title twice, including this past season. The Orange

For the latest information on the SU football program and other sports, go to [suathletics.com](http://suathletics.com).

won six of nine bowl games.

Pasqualoni also saw his student-athletes excel academically. In 1999, SU won the American Football Coaches Association Academic (AFCA) Achievement Award for having a 100 percent graduation rate. The AFCA has recognized the football program for having graduation rates of 70 percent or higher during 14 of the last 17 years. The Orange also produced seven first-round picks in the NFL draft, including current All-Pro Marvin Harrison '96, Donovan McNabb '99, and Dwight Freeney '02.

After posting a 10-3 mark in 2001, the Orange struggled the past three seasons, going 16-20 and making only one bowl appearance, a 51-14 loss to Georgia Tech in the Champs Sports Bowl, which dropped the Orange to 6-6 for the 2004 season. "I'm appreciative for the opportunity that I have been given here," Pasqualoni said at a press conference, thanking all those he worked with through the years. "In looking at the past few seasons, there are some inconsistencies, but at the same time there were some opportunities to do some great things that didn't materialize, and that is unfortunate."

Robinson acknowledged the strong traditions and history of both the University and its football program. He likened SU to a family and discussed his own family, crediting his wife, Laura, for her support and for raising their three children, who are now adults. He talked about his respect for SU players he's worked with in the NFL and lauded the four coaches who have led the Orange since 1950. "I take great pride in being the next in that line," he said. "I really look forward to upholding the traditions and standards that they've set and really working very hard to even raise the bar in all areas."

Robinson, who quickly assembled his coaching staff and is now immersed in spring practice, plans to instill an aggressive defense and a balanced offense with a solid passing attack. In discussing his vision for the program, he said he wants to build a model of excellence that will be emulated by others. "You must win in a way that's very special, like this program has done in the past," he said, emphasizing his belief in the importance of trust, discipline, and perseverance in building an elite program. "If we can really focus on those areas, I think we have a chance to be successful."  
—Jay Cox

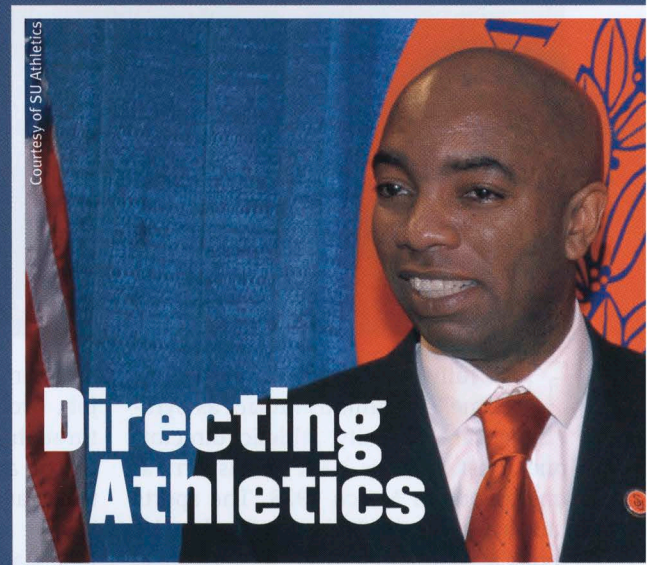
**D**aryl Gross knows what it takes to achieve success in collegiate athletics. During his 14 years as an athletic administrator at the University of Southern California (USC), he saw the Trojans win 15 national titles (including two in football) and more than 30 Pac-10 championships. The school also produced 145 Olympians, developed two Heisman Trophy winners, and consistently finished among the top 10 programs in all-sports rankings. As SU's new athletic director, Gross wants to continue that success. "Whenever I hear the name Syracuse University, I think of greatness. It has a phenomenal history," says the former USC senior associate athletic director, who holds master's and doctoral degrees in educational psychology from USC. "I'm going to lead the charge and champion the cause to make sure that Syracuse, year in and year out, is recognized as one of the great athletic institutions in the country."

Chancellor Nancy Cantor introduced Gross as the University's new athletic director at a December 18 press conference. He succeeds Jake Crouthamel, who is retiring after directing Orange athletics for 27 years (see story, page 16). "Daryl embodies exactly the qualities we are looking for," Cantor says. "He has shown a depth of experience and leadership at USC and, in obtaining both his master's and doctorate, a great appreciation and understanding of academics. This speaks well of his ability to lead a top-notch athletic program and work closely with academic partners in the institution."

Cantor also cited Gross's record in marketing, fund raising, and community engagement. "He has had tremendous success in assessing both Olympic and revenue sports, in recruiting top coaches, and in working with academic and student affairs staff on student-athlete development," she says.

Gross says he uses four principles for evaluating programs: winning championships, graduating student-athletes,

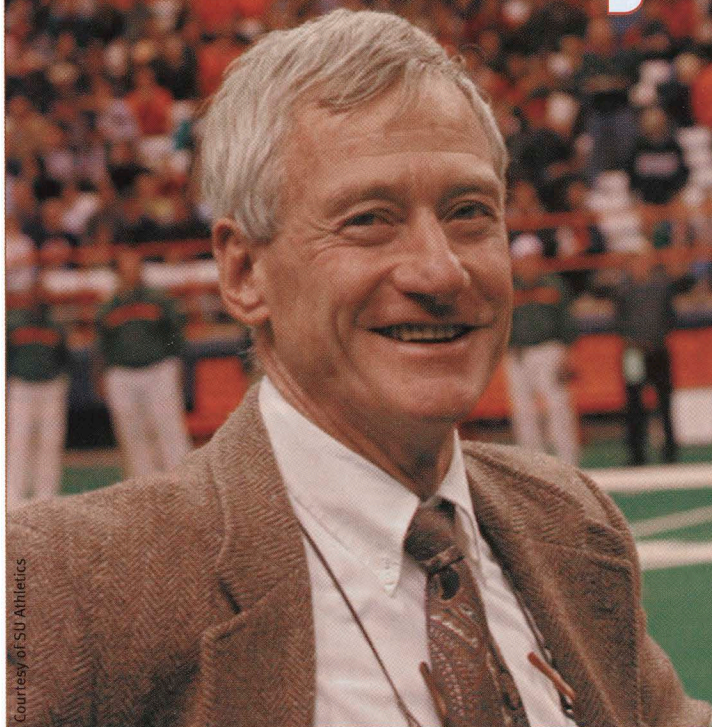
complying with NCAA regulations, and being fiscally sound. At USC, he accumulated a wealth of experience, including conducting coaching searches and contract discussions, leading marketing and corporate sponsorship efforts, negotiating television contracts, and supervising 10 of USC's 19 sports programs. At SU, he plans to put that experience to use to elevate the stature of all sports. "We have to provide the resources and do the things necessary to make sure that Syracuse is at the forefront of college athletics," he says.



Gross was a student-athlete at the University of California, Davis, where he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and played wide receiver from 1979-81. From 1982-85, he was a football coach at UC Davis, the nation's top Division II team in 1985. He also served as an assistant men's tennis coach there. In 1986 and 1987, he was a grad assistant at USC, working with quarterbacks and wide receivers. From 1989 to 1991, he was a scout for the New York Jets. He returned to USC in 1991 as an assistant athletic director and held various positions, including interim director of Student Athlete Academic Services. He was named senior associate athletic director in 2002.

"Jake has done a marvelous job here," Gross says. "I can only hope that I can live up to the passion and the spirit that he's put into the Syracuse program."

# PROGRAM By Jake



Courtesy of SU Athletics

**During his 27 years as director of athletics, Jake Crouthamel transformed sports on the Hill—with the Dome, the Big East, and an unwavering commitment to student-athletes**

**BY SCOTT PITONIAK**

To fully appreciate Jake Crouthamel's enormous impact as Syracuse University athletic director, one must journey back to his arrival on campus in March 1978. The sports landscape on the Hill was desolate by today's standards. The obstacles he faced were the equivalent of fourth-long in football.

A standout football player and coach at Dartmouth College who played professionally for the Boston Patriots, Crouthamel realized the future success of Orange athletics would depend on his ability to upgrade deteriorating facilities and resuscitate a football program that was on life support.

Archbold Stadium, the concrete bowl that had been home to SU football for nearly seven decades, had become such an eyesore that coaches stopped showing it to recruits visiting campus. The stadium's antiquated locker room, occasionally frequented by football-sized rats, was also off-limits to potential student-athletes, lest they be scared away. With the opening of the Carrier Dome on the site of "Old Archie" in 1980, Crouthamel recognized the building's potential as a catalyst for an athletic renaissance, and acted on it.

As he prepares to retire as athletic

director this June after 27 years on the job, Crouthamel's imprint can be seen throughout the SU campus—from the Dome and the additions and renovations at Manley Field House, to the Lampe Athletics Complex, the softball stadium at Skytop, and the new Hookway Fields just down the road. "His fingerprints are on just about everything sports-wise here," says legendary Syracuse basketball coach Jim Boeheim '66, G'73, who has spent more than four decades on campus. "He has been about as loyal and significant a figure as any athlete or coach in school history. Jake has done a fantastic job putting not only our athletic programs, but the entire University on the map."

Crouthamel appreciates the praise, but it also makes him squirm. The 66-year-old native of Perkarsie, Pennsylvania, has never been comfortable in the spotlight, and occasionally his disdain for it has been mistaken for aloofness and stoicism. "It's my belief the credit belongs to the student-athletes and the coaches who guide them," Crouthamel says. "I didn't score the winning goals. I didn't draw up the winning plays."

Yet many believe that without his behind-the-scenes vision and support, their successes would not have been

possible. And it's doubtful the Orange athletic program would have achieved such national prominence during the past quarter century. While receiving credit makes him uncomfortable, he does acknowledge that he had his work cut out for him upon taking the job. "When I arrived, virtually everything, with the possible exception of Jim Boeheim and the basketball program, needed attention," Crouthamel says. "The facilities on campus were terribly lacking, and the revenues that resulted from a dramatic increase in attendance at the Carrier Dome enabled us to address those issues fairly quickly."

It was Crouthamel who convinced Boeheim to move men's basketball games from the cozy confines of 9,200-seat Manley Field House to the cavernous Dome. "I figured since we were selling out Manley, we could add to our revenues by playing in a bigger building," Crouthamel says. "But, I never envisioned crowds in excess of 30,000. I figured if we could sell 1,000 to 2,000 more tickets in the Dome than we had in Manley that would be helpful. I guess I was a little off in my forecast."

When it came to hiring coaches, Crouthamel usually was right on. His most significant hire was Dick

MacPherson as the head football coach, following the 1980 season. “I had gotten to know Mac when I was coaching at Dartmouth,” he says. “In fact, my first game and victory as a head coach was against Mac when he was at the University of Massachusetts. We struck up a friendship, where we would talk every Sunday morning during the season. He was an engaging person, and when it came time to go out and get a guy who was not only a good football coach, but also a personality, I immediately thought of him.”

Success didn’t come instantly under MacPherson. After SU opened the 1986 season with four consecutive losses, some angry fans formed a Sack Mac Pack. But Crouthamel stuck with him, and his faith was rewarded the following season as SU went 11-0-1, starting a streak of 14 consecutive winning seasons. When MacPherson left to coach the NFL’s New England Patriots in 1991, Crouthamel promoted Paul Pasqualoni, and the winning continued.

Crouthamel’s progressive thinking paid off again in the late 1970s when he brainstormed with then-Providence College athletic director Dave Gavitt to form the Big East Conference. “It led to some great rivalries, right off the bat, that captured the community’s attention,” he says. “I credit a lot of it to the coaches in the league. People like John Thompson [Georgetown], Lou Carnesecca [St. John’s], Rollie Massimino [Villanova], and Jim gave the league an identity. And I believe our success fed the success of ESPN, which also was a new kid on the block at the time. The popularity of its ‘Big Monday’ telecasts started with us. We were good for each other.”

In time, the Big East expanded into an all-sports conference that included football. Crouthamel’s only regret is that longtime Eastern power Penn State wasn’t part of the mix. “Geographically and traditionally, I would have liked to have seen the old East Indies, with Syracuse, Penn State, Pitt, Boston College, and West Virginia as the core,”

he says. “But times change and you have to adjust.”

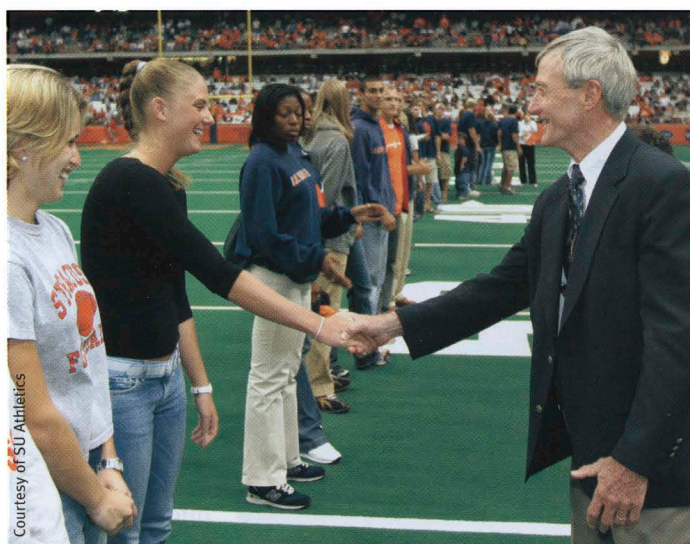
Though less visible than new athletic facilities and coaching hires, the academic success of Syracuse athletes is a big part of the Crouthamel legacy. It’s no coincidence SU consistently ranks among the nation’s best in graduating its student-athletes. Of the 56 colleges that competed in bowl games following the 2004 football season, Syracuse had the highest graduation rate.

When Crouthamel took over, there was just one academic advisor for the

“I think we came out of the process stronger,” Crouthamel says.

To this day, it still bothers him that he had to cut two programs. “Walt Dodge [gymnastics] and Ed Carlin [wrestling] had been loyal, dedicated coaches who had established their programs nationally,” Crouthamel says. “To have to call them in and tell them they no longer were part of the family was not an easy thing to do. But we really had no choice. No one contests the purpose of Title IX legislation. But I don’t believe the drafters of the legislation consid-

“I truly believe being around young people has helped keep me young and motivated.”



Jake Crouthamel congratulates student-athletes at a recognition ceremony during halftime of the SU-Rutgers football game last fall in the Carrier Dome.

entire sports program, and that person worked primarily with football players. Today, Syracuse athletics boasts six full-time academic advisors, eight graduate assistants, and roughly 60 tutors. “If we expect our student-athletes to make a huge time commitment to their respective sports, then we owe it to them to provide the academic support they need to succeed,” Crouthamel says.

Although he has thoroughly enjoyed his time at Syracuse, there have been some disappointing moments. The ones that stick out are the NCAA investigations of the basketball and lacrosse programs during the early ’90s, and the decision later that decade to drop wrestling and men’s gymnastics to meet Title IX requirements instituted to create equal opportunities for women athletes. The investigations led to the formation of an academic compliance department.

ered the unintended results of Title IX. We were dealing with finite resources and had to add several women’s sports. That meant we had to rid ourselves of expenses somewhere else, and unfortunately that led to the elimination of gymnastics and wrestling.”

Although Crouthamel turned over the athletic department’s reins to Daryl Gross in December, he will stay on as an advisor until June 30. At that time, he and his wife, Carol, will move to their year-round home near Hyannis, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod. “I’m struggling with it a bit,” he says, when asked about

life after Syracuse. “It’s dawned on me that I’ve spent two-thirds of my life on college campuses. I truly believe being around young people has helped keep me young and motivated. Now, after so many years of working 24/7, I don’t know what I’m going to do. I’m probably going to have to find a job someplace.”

Though it would embarrass him to hear it, Crouthamel helped build one of the most admired collegiate athletic programs in America. He is handing it over in very good shape—light years ahead of where he found it, more than a quarter of a century ago.

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