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PHOTO GALLERY | VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

John Groce Introduced as Zips Men's Basketball Coach

AKRON, Ohio— University of Akron President **Matthew J. Wilson** and Director of Athletics **Larry Williams** introduced **John Groce** as the Zips' next men's basketball head coach on Thursday at the Student Union.

Groce's appointment is effective immediately, pending approval by the University's Board of Trustees.

Leading his teams to 19 postseason appearances, including two Mid-American Conference championships and an NCAA Sweet 16 appearance, Groce becomes the 22nd head coach of Akron men's basketball. He takes over a Zips' team that posted a school record 27 wins in 2016-17 and made its 13th postseason appearance in Akron's Division I era.

"From the enviable position of much sustained success in our men's basketball program, we concentrated our search on finding a Division I coach with a proven track record of excellence, winning, and post-season appearances, combined with a focus on academics and discipline. Coach Groce has that combination." Williams said. "We're extraordinarily pleased that he will be bringing his impressive experience and background to our Zips basketball program."

"Coach Groce has the commitment to excellence that has been instilled in our program, and I am confident that he will continue to build on that core and achieve even greater successes in the years ahead," President Wilson stated. "He is passionate about winning the right way, and I know our student-athletes and UA fans and supporters will be excited to see his energy, enthusiasm, and coaching skill on our side of the court."

Prior to joining the Zips, Groce was head men's basketball coach at the University of Illinois for five seasons. He led the Illini to an average of 19 wins per season during his tenure along with postseason appearances in three of his first four years in Champaign, owning a record of 95-75.

Groce pursued building a championship program in all phases. There were signature wins on the court, player development improvements, recruiting success, and achievement in the classroom as well. Illinois carried a team GPA over 3.0 for five consecutive semesters, highlighted by a 3.27 in fall 2015 – tied for the highest among all UI men's teams – and a 3.07 in spring 2016. A team-record six players earned 2015-16 Academic All-Big Ten accolades, and the program's most recent NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) multiyear score of 990 ranked third in the Big Ten.

He arrived at Illinois after four seasons as head coach at Ohio University, where he led the Bobcats to an 85-56 overall record as well as Mid-American Conference Tournament titles and NCAA Tournament appearances in 2010 and 2012.

Ohio was the story of the 2012 Tournament, advancing to the Sweet 16 as a No. 13 seed with victories over No. 4 seed Michigan followed by No. 12 seed South Florida. The Bobcats made a strong push for the Elite Eight before falling to No. 1 seed North Carolina in overtime in the regional semifinal. It marked just the second time in Ohio's school history and first since 1964 that the Bobcats won multiple games in the NCAA Tournament. Ohio finished the 2012 season with a school-record 29 wins and was known for its pressure defense, ranking second nationally in turnover percentage and third in steals percentage.

Ohio also made noise in the 2010 postseason. Playing in the school's first NCAA Tournament game in five seasons, the Bobcats received a No. 14 seed and defeated No. 3 seed Georgetown. With the 2010 and 2012 NCAA performances, Ohio became just the sixth school ever to win Tournament games as both a 13 and 14 seed.

Groce has a total of 24 years in the coaching profession and has been part of teams that have made 19 postseason appearances. His record in 15 years as an assistant was an impressive 349-156, giving him a combined record of 511-273.

Groce earned his first head-coaching job at Ohio following four seasons on Thad Matta's staff at Ohio State from 2005-08, the first two as assistant coach and last two as associate head coach. During Groce's time in Columbus the Buckeyes amassed a record of 105-35, advanced to the NCAA Championship game in 2007 and second round in 2006, claimed back-to-back outright Big Ten Championships in 2006 and 2007 and won the NIT in 2008. Groce played a key role in recruiting many of the top players at Ohio State and was named Rivals' 2006 National Recruiter of the Year.

In all, Groce spent eight years as an assistant under Matta. Prior to his time at Ohio State, Groce served three years on Matta's staff at Xavier from 2002-04 and one

season at Butler in 2001. The Musketeers went 78-23 and made three straight NCAA appearances, advancing to the second round in 2002 and 2003 and the Elite Eight in 2004. Xavier also won consecutive Atlantic 10 titles in 2002 and 2003. Butler, meanwhile, went 24-8 and won a conference crown in 2001 while also advancing to the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

Groce entered the Division I coaching ranks as a member of Herb Sendek's staff at North Carolina State from 1997-2000. The Wolfpack went 73-58 overall and advanced to the NIT in each of the four seasons Groce was in Raleigh, including a trip to the semifinals in 2000.

Groce got his start in coaching as an assistant at his alma mater, Taylor University in Upland, Indiana. Groce spent three years on Paul Patterson's staff from 1994-96, helping lead the Trojans to a 69-32 record and pair of trips to the NAIA national tournament. Groce played for Patterson for three years from 1991-93 before making the transition to a student assistant role as a senior. Taylor compiled a 90-16 record and made three trips to the NAIA Tournament during Groce's playing career, including a 1991 Final Four appearance during his freshman season.

Groce, 45, earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Taylor in 1994. He and his wife, Allison, have two sons, Conner and Camden, and a daughter, Cate.

The C.P. and Cornelia S. Chima Athletics Ticket Office at InfoCision Stadium - Summa Field is accepting non-refundable deposits for 2017-18 basketball season tickets at \$50 per seat. Limited lower level chair back seats are available, starting at \$410 per seat. Renewal invoices for existing season ticket holders will be sent out in mid-summer. To place a deposit, or for further information, call **1-888-99-AKRON** (25766) or visit from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET on Mondays through Fridays. Ticket office is located at 375 E. Exchange Street, near Gate 1 at the southwest corner of the venue, at the corner of E. Exchange and S. Union streets.

The John Groce File

YEAR-BY-YEAR COACHING RECORD

<i>Season</i>		<i>Overall</i>	<i>Conference</i>	<i>Standing</i>	<i>Postseason</i>
2008-09	Ohio	15-17	7-9	6 th East	
2009-10	Ohio	22-15	7-9	5 th East	NCAA Second Round
2010-11	Ohio	19-16	9-7	3 rd East	CIT Quarterfinals
2011-12	Ohio	29-8	11-5	3 rd East	NCAA Sweet 16
4 seasons		85-56 (.603)	34-30 (.531)		
2012-13	Illinois	23-13	8-10	T7th	NCAA Third Round
2013-14	Illinois	20-15	7-11	T8th	NIT Second Round
2014-15	Illinois	19-14	9-9	T7th	NIT First Round
2015-16	Illinois	15-19	5-13	12 th	
2016-17	Illinois	18-14	8-10	9th	
5 seasons		95-75 (.559)	37-53 (.411)		

CAREER 9 yrs. 180-131 (.579)

COACHING EXPERIENCE

2017-present	Akron	Head Coach
2013-17	Illinois	Head Coach
2009-12	Ohio	Head Coach
2007-08	Ohio State	Associate Head Coach
2005-06	Ohio State	Assistant Coach
2002-04	Xavier	Assistant Coach
2001	Butler	Assistant Coach
1997-00	N.C. State	Assistant Coach
1994-96	Taylor	Assistant Coach

BIRTHDATE

Sept. 7, 1971

HOMETOWN

Danville, Ind.

EDUCATION

Taylor University, B.S. in mathematics, 1994

COLLEGIATE PLAYING CAREER

1991-93 Basketball (Taylor)

FAMILY

Wife- Allison

Children- Conner (11), Camden (7), and Cate (2)

What They're Saying About John Groce ...

"I am so happy for John and his family. John and I have spent a lot of time together, and I have the utmost respect for him and the job he does as a coach and a mentor of young men. This is a great opportunity for him and a fantastic hire by the University of Akron." – **Thad Matta, Ohio State Head Coach**

"John is a terrific basketball coach, a tireless worker, and a proven recruiter. He's a great hire to build on Akron's tradition and recent success. And nobody will attack the job with more vigor and enthusiasm than John." – **Brad Stevens, Boston Celtics Head Coach**

"John Groce is an excellent basketball coach. His successful background as the head coach at Ohio U., coupled with the tremendous job he did at Illinois – in spite of the unprecedented rash of injuries that he experienced – prepares him for this opportunity at Akron. There isn't a more determined or prepared coach in college basketball right now than John Groce. Akron will continue its great tradition under John's leadership."
– **Sean Miller, Arizona Head Coach**

– GO ZIPS –