



WHAT UIC'S HEAD COACHES ARE SAYING ABOUT JOINING THE VALLEY:

Head Men's Basketball Coach, Luke Yaklich

"From top to bottom, the Missouri Valley Conference is one of the strongest and most recognizable brands in college basketball. UIC men's basketball truly looks forward to the opportunity to compete regularly against some of the toughest teams in the country. As an alum of one of our new peers, Illinois State, I know firsthand the passion and enthusiasm for basketball that runs through The Valley and am ecstatic to bring that heat here to UIC. We are so thankful for the leadership of our university and our athletics department, specifically Chancellor Amiridis and Michael Lipitz, for affording our young men this opportunity to shine on a big stage."

Head Women's Basketball Coach, Tasha Pointer

"Our Flames are thrilled to join forces with such a competitive conference. With a long history of sending multiple teams to the NCAA Tournament, the Missouri Valley Conference will challenge us to be at our best day in and day out, and that is a test we truly look forward to taking on. We welcome our future with open arms because we know it will make all of us better as we grow our program."

Head Baseball Coach, Sean McDermott

"The Valley's history of success on the baseball field speaks for itself. This is a conference that is rich in tradition, features legendary coaches and has a strong presence in the NCAA Tournament. Our baseball program is excited about new opportunities and challenges ahead of us in one of the best baseball conferences in the country. It's a great move for our team and the UIC athletics department."

Head Softball Coach, Lynn Curylo

"This is a tremendous opportunity for not only UIC softball and our athletics department, but for our entire university. As an alumnae of UIC, I have lived through the evolution of athletics and I could not be more excited about this next chapter with the MVC. We have had several opportunities to take the field against current conference members over the years and those are always some of our toughest challenges year in and year out and we are thrilled to continue those relationships on a regular basis."

Head Men's Soccer Coach, Sean Phillips

"The Missouri Valley Conference has a long history as a nationally competitive, multi-bid conference in the sport of men's soccer. I am confident our players, staff and alumni are looking forward to the challenge of competing for championships within The Valley. This transition and the significant financial investment toward Flames Field, both led by Chancellor Michael Amiridis and Director of Athletics Michael Lipitz, shows the commitment of UIC to have a men's soccer program that belongs prominently on a national stage."

Head Women's Soccer Coach, David Nikolic

"UIC women's soccer is excited and motivated to enhance our profile as we make the move to the Missouri Valley Conference next year. As we continue to develop our own program's culture and expand our recruiting visibility, we anticipate participation in the MVC will reinforce those ideas for our student-athletes."



Head Volleyball Coach, Justin Ingram

“This is a special day for UIC and all of our athletic programs. Having come to UIC from a Missouri Valley Conference school [Southern Illinois] five years ago, I’m familiar with the high level of competition we will face. Each year the MVC volleyball teams position themselves to earn multiple NCAA Tournament bids. After experiencing our program’s first-ever appearance in postseason play this past fall, we plan to continue competing for championships while facing new challenges and rivals.”

Head Women’s Tennis Coach, Shannon Tully

“I have coached many championship teams during my time at UIC, and I am excited for the opportunity to contend with the Missouri Valley Conference programs moving forward. This is a great day for UIC and we are all fired up to be moving in this new direction.”

Head Swimming & Diving Coach, Tim Loeffler

“UIC is fortunate to be joining such a great group of schools and athletic departments in the MVC. This opportunity will be a game changer for our athletes, and it will require us to be our best every single day.”

Head Cross Country and Track & Field Coach, Ashley Lucas

“With multiple team and individual championships in cross country and track and field, The Valley is an extremely deep conference. We look forward to these new challenges as we try to get into the mix to battle for titles of our own.”

Head Women’s Golf Coach, Mat Blair

“What a great day for UIC! Our golf program has had the opportunity to see many MVC members on the course over the years, so we know that it is a talented group of teams that will force us to raise our level of play each time we tee it up. We’re thrilled to be part of this new era for the Flames.”



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