



Jim Dennison

Ken MacDonald

Jim Dennison spent most of his professional life as a successful coach and administrator at The University of Akron, twenty-eight years to be exact. He began his career in 1965 as an assistant football coach under Gordon Larson, serving him well before succeeding him in 1973.

Dennison, whose football philosophy was “Win with PMA” or positive mental attitude, would go on to establish himself as the University’s most successful and longest-serving head football coach in school history. That thirteen-year career would produce eighty wins, sixty-two losses, and two ties, becoming the University’s all-time winningest football coach.

Dennison was the first and only University of Akron football coach to win ten games in a season, the first to win a postseason game and the first to play for a national championship—all in 1976. That year he became the first Zip football coach to be named Ohio Coach of the Year and the first to be voted Kodak National Coach of the Year.

His three best teams were 10–3 in 1976, 8–3 in 1983, and 8–4 in his last season in 1985 that earned the University a NCAA I AA playoff berth. He recruited or coached thirty-two All-Americans, eighteen All-OVC first teamers, and three OVC Players of the Year.

Dennison stepped out of his coaching position on December 18, 1985 to become associate athletic director and was promoted to director of athletics on August 5, 1987. Before retiring from the University in June 1993, Dennison was primary in getting The University of Akron to join the Mid-American Conference.