



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### THE MISSISSIPPI EXCELLENCE IN COACHING FELLOWSHIP OFFICIALLY LAUNCHES

Twenty-five leaders are selected for the inaugural class that aims to amplify the work of Mississippi's best high school and middle school coaches

Oxford, MS - (January 23, 2023) – Today, the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship announced the 25 Coaches who have been selected as the program's inaugural class. The Coaching Fellowship, also known as Tomorrow's 25, is hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Education in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Coaches (MAC) and the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA). Its mission is to annually select and invest in 25 coaches from across the state who have been deemed an emerging leader in the area of high school and middle school athletics.

All 25 candidates were identified by a selection committee and represent the best the state has to offer. Final selections had to represent the values of the coaching fellowship – love of young people and a desire to develop them for life within the context of sports – and had to be diverse in gender, ethnicity, sport, and region of the state. Serving on the inaugural selection committee were Celeste Bramlett (Madison Central), Greg Carter (Hattiesburg), Derrick Hooker (Hollandale Simmons), Karen Dixon (Noxubee County), and Chris Cutcliffe (Oxford).

Over the course of 10 months, Coaches will travel five times to the MAC/MHSAA's headquarters in Clinton for in-person class, while the other five sessions are done virtually. The goals for each session of the coaching fellowship are to assist in three areas of growth for each candidate:

1. Coaching the Whole Athlete (Leadership, Resilience, Empathy, and Responsibility) - Each participant will be able to implement all sessions' materials at their current school and share with their colleagues.
2. Opportunity to network with 24 of their peers who have demonstrated the capacity to be our state's future leaders in athletics.
3. Access to current leaders in the MHSAA, MAC, Higher Ed, College Athletics, and "potentially" Pro Athletics to learn how they can grow their spheres of influence in their communities and across the state.

The first session was held on August 17<sup>th</sup>, and the Coaches just completed their sixth session in Clinton on January 18<sup>th</sup>. The inaugural class will officially finish the program in mid-May.



Called Tomorrow's 25, the inaugural class members and their schools are:

- Issac Boose, football and powerlifting, Oxford High School
- Jake Bramlett, football, Ocean Springs High School
- LaRoskee Brown, football and baseball, Humphreys County High School
- Jessie Bryant Jr., football and baseball; Noxubee County High School
- Blake Chancelor, football, Meridian High School
- Tre Collins, basketball, Meridian High School
- Taylor Huey Elliott, volleyball, Lafayette High School
- Ashley Hilton Ford, softball, DeSoto Central High School
- John Haberman, football and basketball, Saint Stanislaus High School
- Jackie A. Hill, track and field, B.F. Liddell Middle School (Noxubee County)
- Nyjuria Johnson, softball, Oakhurst Intermediate Academy (Clarksdale)
- Alexia Jones, basketball, Pelahatchie High School
- John M. Kitele, tennis, Noxubee County High School
- Joshua Lockett, basketball, Northwest Rankin High School
- Holly Moncrief, basketball, Lake High School
- Mandy Moore, basketball, Charleston High School
- Chris Patton, track and cross country, Oxford High School
- LaCambrise Pope, basketball, South Panola High School
- Tate Rogers, football, Madison Central High School
- Felix Russ, powerlifting and track, Noxubee County High School
- Ashli Sutton, basketball, Callaway High School (Jackson)
- Frank Sutton Jr., football and basketball, Kirksey Middle School (Jackson)
- Taylor H. Taylor, softball, Cleveland Central High School
- Ricardo Tigler, football, Leland High School
- Veronica Walker, basketball, Leland High School

###

More about the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship:

Dr. Hunter Taylor is the founding director of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship and also a Clinical Assistant Professor in the School of Education at the University of Mississippi. Before making the leap into academia, Taylor spent 10 years as a men's basketball coach on the college, high school, middle school, and international levels. He began his coaching career in Jackson Public Schools.

"Our organization believes in the transformational power of the coach, and we could not be more excited about how this fellowship will benefit our coaches and ultimately our student-athletes for years to come," said Johnny Mims, executive director of the MAC.

"We're always going to be in the business of doing what is best for student-athletes and coaches, and we believe this is going to be a game-changer for our state," said Rickey Neaves, executive director of the MHSAA.