

## UTEP women's basketball welcomes back Keitha Adams

BY ITZEL A. GIRON  
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Sunday, Nov. 5, there is one person who, although was not labelled as "Homecoming Queen", surely wears the title.

UTEP Women's Basketball Head Coach Keitha Adams, returned "home" to hopefully take the Miners to another winning season to follow not only the legacy she left behind, but the one forming last season.

After the resignation of former head coach Kevin Baker earlier this year, Adams was announced as the new head coach in April. And she is ready for her own version of homecoming.

In 2017, Adams announced she would be leaving UTEP, her second home, and would be the new head coach for Wichita State in her home state.

"The first day was a hurricane, the second day a windstorm, the third day a dustbowl," Adams said when addressing her departure in a 2017 press conference. "I think I cried more than when I got divorced, I cried like people do when they drop off their first-born at college. This is how great an experience it's been here at UTEP. It's been emotional in all different kinds of aspects."

After five years, Adams has returned to continue the successful season the Miners had in years prior and hopes to translate her commitment to the Sun City through wins.

"I just wanted to return," Adams said. "I missed El Paso and coaching the exhibition game in the Don Haskins felt really great being back in there."

Having been the head coach for 16 years prior to her stint at Wichita State, Adams remains the most

winningest coach in UTEP history. Her return to the borderland has not only fans but UTEP Athletics Director Jim Senter excited for what is to come.

"Her first stint as head coach of the Miners produced unprecedented success for our women's basketball program. She loves UTEP and she loves this community, and she is so excited to be coming back. We look forward to creating more magical moments with her back at the helm of Miner Basketball."

However, with such excitement comes much pressure from fans who have seen Adams take the women's team to championships.

"I've always put a lot of pressure on myself as a coach. I hate to lose, I'm not allergic to anything except losing," Adams said. "It's not about feeling pressure from anywhere outside, it's more self-motivation and internal pressure."

Having only worked with one player prior to her return to UTEP, it is tricky for any coach trying to build chemistry and trust with an entirely new team.

"I like (the team) on and off the court," Adams said. "They're coachable and their work ethics good. They've been very receptive to the system and learning the process."

After a victorious win against the New Mexico Highlands Cowgirls Oct. 28, the upcoming season looks promising. Though there are areas of improvement needed, Adams is ready to start the season off with a bang.

"I thought we showed some good things. I think we've got some areas we (have) got to work on. But you know we shot the ball well and we've got good post players," Adams said. "We got to get more physical. We got to get tougher. Our defense

has to get better."

Adams return is set to be a big one, it is also the stacked coaching staff alongside her that makes this team one to look out for.

Ewa Laskowska returned as assistant head coach after assisting Adams as head coach while at UTEP and Wichita State. Jareica Hughes and Lulu Mckinney are assistant coaches who have both played under Adams at UTEP.

Aside from her staff, Men's Basketball Head Coach Joe Golding is another source of energy and support.

"My staff is really unique because all three of them played for me and two of them played here at UTEP," Adams said. "So, we have a staff that really bleeds orange. (Coach Golding and I) have a great friendship. We're teammates. We want each other to be successful."

As the season starts this week, Coach Adams and the Miners are asking for everyone's support this season.

"When our fans get behind our team, our players feed off the fans and then all of a sudden the fans start feeding off our players and all of a sudden, you've got this chemistry between your players and your fans," Adams said. "The fans are the difference. I'm back, I need the fans back."

The UTEP Miners are set to face off against the Kansas City Roos, Nov. 11 at the Don Haskins Center after a strong win against the Western New Mexico Mustangs Monday afternoon Nov. 6.

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# HOMECOMING QUEEN OF THE COURT



MINERS LOSE TO STANFORD WITH A SCORE OF 88-54 DURING THE SECOND ROUND OF THE NCAA TOURNAMENT.



MINERS LOSE TO PENN STATE WITH A SCORE OF 85-77 DURING THE FIRST ROUND OF THE NCAA TOURNAMENT.



MINERS REACH THE FINALS OF THE WNIT BUT LOSE TO RUTGERS WITH A SCORE OF 56-54.



MINERS REACH THE QUARTERFINALS OF THE WNIT BUT LOSE TO OREGON WITH A SCORE OF 71-67.

