

## Gary Darnell and Glen Mason to Speak at Xs and Os with the Legends

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X's and O's with the Legends will take place on Sunday, January 9 at the Hilton Anatole Hotel in Dallas. Speaking on defense will be former Western Michigan head coach, Gary Darnell, and offensive



**Gary Darnell**

spokesperson will be Glen Mason, 2002 AFCA President and former head coach at Minnesota and Kansas.

Darnell spent eight years as head coach at Western Michigan, guiding the Broncos to two Mid-American Conference West Division titles in 1999 and 2000. The 2000 squad finished with a 9-3 overall record, and broke a 41-year old

school record by winning eight games in a row that year. For his teams efforts, Darnell was named MAC Coach of the Year in 2000.

Darnell took over a Western Michigan program that went 2-9 in 1996. He led the Broncos to a six-game turnaround, going 8-3 in 1997 and recording the biggest turnaround in the NCAA that year.

Darnell got his coaching start as a graduate assistant at his alma mater, Oklahoma State in 1970. He was then hired as the Cowboys full-time linebackers coach from 1971-72. After that, he coached the linebackers for three years at SMU, then moved onto North Carolina as linebackers coach from 1976-77. From 1978 to 1982, he served as assistant head coach and defensive coordinator at Kansas State University. Darnell and staff took Kansas State to their first-ever bowl appearance in 1982 in the Independence Bowl.

After spending three years as head coach at Tennessee Tech from 1983 to 1985, Darnell moved on to assistant head coach and defensive coordinator at Wake Forest (1986-1987) under Al Groh. He spent two years at Florida (1988-1989) as defensive coordinator. Darnell's Florida defenses ranked third nationally in both his season's as defensive coordinator, and first in the Southeastern Conference. He took over as interim head coach at Florida during the 1989 season and led the Gators to a 3-4 record in its final seven games. In 1990, Darnell became defensive coordinator at Notre Dame for two years, then spent five years at Texas as assistant head coach, defensive coordinator and special teams coordinator.

Darnell most recently served as defensive coordinator at Texas A&M from 2006 to 2007, serving as interim head coach in the 2007 Alamo Bowl.

Glen Mason served as head coach for 21 seasons at Kent State (1986-87), Kansas (1988-96) and Minnesota (1997-2006), and was president of AFCA in 2002. At the time of his retirement, Mason was one of only five active coaches to win at least 40 games at two different Division I schools.

Mason was hired at Minnesota in 1997. His first season with the Gophers was a huge success, as they broke or tied a total of

28 school records. Success continued with 26 individual and team records broken in the 1999 season and 15 records in 2000. The Gophers had seven bowl appearances under Mason's leadership, including wins at the Music City Bowl in 2002 and 2004, and the Sun Bowl in 2003. Mason's 2003 team went 10-3 overall.

In 1999, Mason became only the third coach in NCAA history to be named the conference coach of the year in three different conferences (Big 10-1999 / Big Eight-1991, 1995 / Mid-American-1986).

Before his stop at Minnesota, Mason led the Kansas Jayhawks for nine seasons and coached 102 games, more than anyone in Kansas' school history. He helped turn the Kansas program around, which had only won a total of four games in their previous two seasons (1986-87). The Jayhawks won two Aloha Bowl games during Mason's time as head coach, first in 1992 and again in 1995. Between the years 1992 and 1995, the Jayhawks recorded 29 wins, which was the most wins in any four-year period at Kansas in 85 years. Kansas went 10-2 overall in 1995, which marked the first time since 1905 that the program had recorded 10 wins in a season.



**Glen Mason**

During Mason's two years as head coach at Kent State, he led the Golden Flash to a runner-up finish in the Mid-American Conference in 1986 and a 7-4 record in 1987, the program's first winning season in over a decade.

Throughout his career, Mason has received several honors. He was the first coach from Minnesota to be awarded the Dave McClain Big Ten Coach of the Year title, and was named National Coach of the Year by Football News in 1999. In 1992 and 1995, Mason was named AFCA Region IV Coach of the Year and a finalist for the Bear Bryant National Coach of the Year Award. He was named Big Eight Conference Coach of the Year in 1991 and 1995, and in 1986, Mason took home Mid-American Conference Coach of the Year honors. He is currently a football analyst for the Big Ten Network.

