



Jon Heacock

Head Coach

**Ninth Season | 54-39 Overall
(Muskingum, 1983)**

Youngstown State University football coach Jon Heacock had a plan for success when he took over the program and through hard work, drive and determination, that has paid off, but in 2009 there are going to be changes.

Heacock will take over the defense as a coordinator, a position he held prior to becoming head coach in 2000. He was also the coordinator during the program's first three NCAA titles in the 1990's.

Looking to roll up his sleeves after a tough 2008 campaign shows just how much passion for the program Heacock possesses.

In the three years prior to 2008, YSU had won 26 games and two Conference championships while advancing to the Football Championship Subdivision playoff semifinals in 2006. The Penguins posted a 7-4 mark in 2007, an 11-3 campaign in 2006 and posted an 8-3 mark in 2005.

In 2008, YSU had to overcome injuries - 26 players missed at least one game while 20 missed multi-games - and inexperience - 28 made their first career starts - but in the end the group showed what Penguin pride is all about.

Youngstown State won its final two games sending its seniors out on a high note and giving the underclassmen some momentum heading in 2009.

In 2007, Youngstown State opened the year at Ohio State, the first football contest against the Buckeyes in the program's history. YSU rebounded from the loss to win four consecutive home games, including a win over Great West Conference Champion South Dakota State.

A top-10 matchup at Southern Illinois came down to the final play, but the Penguins came up just short falling to the Salukis by a touchdown. The next week, YSU picked up its first one-point win since 1997 beating Southern Utah. Two straight tightly-contested contests did not go the Guins' way following that decision. YSU lost by five points to Illinois State and suffered a one-point loss at top-ranked UNI. Overall, YSU's three FCS losses were by a total of 13 points.

In true Penguin fashion, the team rebounded with two impressive wins to end the season over Indiana State and Western Illinois. It was the fifth time that the Guins won at least seven games under Coach Heacock.

The journey during the 2006 season will be remembered for a long time. YSU posted five wins over top-25 ranked foes, earned the school's first outright Gateway title since joining the league in 1997, earned an automatic bid to the playoffs for the first time since 1987 and captured conference titles in consecutive years for the first time since 1978-79.

The Penguins had a league-record 10 first-team all-conference selections while a group of 15 players earned all-league accolades. Four Guins earned All-America honors of some sort, including first-team selections Ryan Jewell (center) and Marcus Mason (tailback).

For the second consecutive season, Heacock was named the conference's Bruce Craddock Coach of the Year, the American Football Coaches Association's FCS Region Four Coach of the Year and a finalist for the Eddie Robinson Award.

The Penguins went through the non-conference portion of the regular-season with a 3-1 mark, the lone loss at eventual Bowl Champion Penn State. A preseason top 10 team, YSU beat Slippery Rock, Maine and UC Davis to build momentum entering conference play.

In league action, the Guins opened up 3-0 with road wins at Missouri State and Western Illinois

and a home win over Indiana State. Following a tough loss to Northern Iowa, the Penguins rebounded winning at third-ranked Illinois State, beating 12th-ranked Southern Illinois on Senior Day and concluding the regular season with a win at Western Kentucky.

In the playoffs, YSU overcame a 31-20 fourth-quarter deficit to beat sixth-ranked James Madison 35-31 before a national-television audience on ESPN2. In a rematch against Illinois State, YSU held on to win 28-21. The wins at Stambaugh Stadium extended a postseason home winning streak to 14 and gave Youngstown State a 7-1 home record for the year.

In the national semifinals, top-ranked and eventual national champion Appalachian State handed the Guins a 49-24 setback to end the campaign. YSU reached the semis for the first time since 1999.

In 2005, Coach Heacock and his staff were able to turnaround a program that had two consecutive losing seasons and was picked sixth in the conference at the start of the year.

Youngstown State finished the 2005 campaign with an 8-3 overall record and a 5-2 conference mark. YSU earned a part of its first-ever Gateway Conference title finishing in a tie with Southern Illinois and Northern Iowa.

The Penguins jumped out to an impressive 7-1 start. YSU opened 3-0 before losing to Pittsburgh. Youngstown State regrouped and rattled off consecutive conference victories over Illinois State, Indiana State, Missouri State and Western Illinois. After tough road defeats at UNI and Southern Illinois, YSU closed out the regular season with an impressive 42-10 victory over Western Kentucky.

The Penguins were tough to beat at home posting a perfect 6-0 mark. It was the first time since 1994 the YSU went through a regular-season unbeaten at home.

In the final regular-season polls, Youngstown State was ranked 13th after receiving a meager five votes in the preseason rankings.

Following the regular season, Heacock was named the Gateway's Bruce Craddock Coach of the Year marking the first time since the Penguins joined the league in 1997 that a YSU coach had earned the honor. Overall, Youngstown State had 12 all-conference selections, including five on the first team. They also had the conference's Newcomer of the Year in Mason.

For the first time he was named the AFCA's Region Four Coach of the Year. He was also a finalist for the Eddie Robinson Coach-of-the-Year Award.

After seven years with the program, Heacock owns a 50-31 mark since taking over in January 2001. He has had four winning seasons with the school and on three occasions has produced eight victories in a campaign.

Heacock helped create a blueprint for success throughout the most of the 1990's as an assistant coach, and despite the fact that YSU's plan for success has been followed by most other Division I-AA schools, the program has remained solid under his leadership as head coach.

In 2004, the Penguins' youth movement continued with only 13 seniors on the roster. YSU showed improvement throughout the season and won two of its final three games to finish 4-7. Youngstown State's record hinged on just a few moments with five of the seven losses coming by six points or less.

In 2003, numerous injuries, youth and playing Division I-AA's toughest schedule led to a 5-7 mark. The Penguins began the year strong winning four of six games, but lost five of their final six contests -- four of which came to teams that played in the postseason and were then ranked in the top 10. Overall in 2003, YSU played six teams that advanced to the postseason -- including five in the Division I-AA playoffs -- and eight who finished at .500 or better.

In 2002, the Penguins finished with a 7-4 mark and showed their true character winning the final three games of the season after splitting the first eight contests. In the final three games -- wins over Southern Illinois, Illinois State and Samford -- Youngstown showed it is a program that is full of heart, and Heacock is the one who leads the charge. YSU finished 4-3 in the competitive Gateway, marking the sixth straight year it finished above .500 in the league.

In his first season in 2001, he had the best season of any first-year coach in school history as the Penguins posted an 8-3 mark.

Heacock, who is the fifth head coach in school history and the fourth to have his first head-coaching position being in charge of the Penguins, has been up to the challenge despite facing the daunting task of filling the shoes of a four-time national-title winning coach and leading a program that has had numerous successes.

He had spent seven of the past 10 years as an assistant under Jim Tressel before the opportunity

arose for Heacock to take over the program.

Tressel left for Ohio State after 15 years as the Penguins' head coach and on Jan. 25, 2001, Heacock was named the school's fifth head coach.

In Heacock's debut, the Penguins beat Lock Haven 38-7 as he became just the second head coach in school history to win his opening game. Victories over Clarion and Western Illinois followed as Heacock became the first coach in school history to win his first three YSU games.

Throughout the remainder of the season, YSU earned wins over Indiana State, Missouri State, Illinois State, Southern Illinois and Elon while suffering defeats to NCAA semifinalist Northern Iowa, NCAA Playoff qualifier Western Kentucky and I-A Bowl champion Marshall.

Against Marshall, the Penguins led the 20th-ranked team in Division I-A into the fourth quarter and battled until the final seconds before losing a heartbreaking 38-24 decision.

With the eight victories, Heacock set a school record for wins by a first-year coach and tied for the second-most victories by a first-year coach in the Gateway.

Heacock first came to YSU before the 1990 season and since his arrival the program has had tremendous success. From 1991 through 2002 the program has won four national championships, appeared in the playoffs seven times and won 116 games.

Before taking over as the head coach in January 2001, Heacock had been a member of the coaching staff for seven of the 10 previous years as an assistant, including spending six as the defensive coordinator.

Heacock was the defensive coordinator at YSU from 1992 through 1996 before going to Indiana. He returned to YSU from Indiana University for the 2000 season to serve as the defensive coordinator and less than a year later became the head coach.

In 2000, in Heacock's second stint as a defensive coordinator with the YSU program, the Penguins defense was a key factor in leading the team to a 9-3 mark and an appearance in the Division I-AA playoffs. Youngstown finished 15th in the nation in scoring defense.

Before returning to YSU, he spent three seasons as the defensive coordinator and defensive backs coach at Indiana.

Heacock's first stay at Youngstown State brought much success to the program in his six seasons (61-19-2). In his first four years YSU appeared in the Division I-AA championship game and earned three national championships (1991, 1993 and 1994). He was the defensive backs coach in 1991 as YSU finished 12-3 and beat Marshall 25-17 in the National Championship Game.

The next season he was promoted to defensive coordinator, while also coaching the defensive backs, and served in that capacity through the 1996 campaign. In 1992, YSU advanced to the title game losing to Marshall. His defense in 1993 yielded only 15.5 points per game and helped the Penguins to a 17-5 victory in the championship game against Marshall.

His 1994 unit may have been his best allowing an average of 10.1 points per game and holding nine of 15 opponents to 10 points or less. YSU finished the year with a school-record 14-0-1 mark capped by a win over Boise State in the title game. YSU finished 3-8 in 1995 and was 8-3 in 1996.

Prior to his first stint at YSU, Heacock served as an assistant coach at the United States Military Academy from 1990-91.

From 1988 to 1990, Heacock was a graduate assistant at Michigan under coach Bo Schlembechler where he worked with the Wolverines' defensive backs and special teams in addition to assisting in many other capacities. During his two years, Michigan won two Big Ten titles and appeared in the Rose Bowl twice, winning in 1989.

Prior to his stint at Michigan, Heacock was the defensive coordinator, secondary coach, and defensive line coach at West Liberty College from 1985-87.

Heacock's coaching career began in 1983 when he was hired as a graduate assistant to be the defensive line coach at the University of Toledo. After spending one season with the Rockets, Heacock joined the staff at Steubenville High School, where he helped guide The Big Red to the 1984 Ohio Division II State Championship.

Heacock, who is a native of Beloit, Ohio, earned a bachelor's degree in health and physical education from Muskingum College in 1983. At Muskingum, Heacock played football and competed on the track and field team. He is a 1979 graduate of West Branch High School.

Jon and his wife, Trescia, who is a registered nurse, have a son, Jace and a daughter, Adelyn.