

DONNIE NELSON

One of the most respected minds in the NBA, Donnie Nelson is involved in every aspect of the Mavericks basketball operations. Nelson, who owns 29 years of NBA experience, came to Dallas on Jan. 2, 1998, after three seasons as an assistant coach with the Phoenix Suns. Nelson was instrumental in rebuilding a team that suffered a decade-long playoff drought into a perennial playoff team and championship contender. Under Nelson, the Mavericks have won 63.3% (801-464) of their games with three 60+ win seasons, including a franchise-record 67-win season in 2007, which tied for the sixth-best record in NBA history.

The Mavericks are also one of only six NBA franchises to win 60 games or more three times in a five-year span. During his tenure, the Mavericks have made the playoffs in 13 of the last 14 seasons, been to the Western Conference Finals three times, advanced to the NBA Finals twice, captured their first Division title in 20 years in 2007 and won their first World Championship in 2011. Nelson successfully coached the Mavericks while his father and former head coach, Don Nelson, was recovering from cancer surgery in 2000-01. Donnie led the team to a 15-8 record while serving as head coach. He was the top assistant to his father at Golden State, where he served the organization a total of eight seasons (1986-94). Nelson was also a regional scout for the Milwaukee Bucks for two seasons (1984-86).

From 1990-2006, Nelson served as an assistant coach for the Lithuanian National Team. In that span, he helped them win three bronze medals in four Olympiads, a silver medal in the 1995 European Championships and a gold medal in the 2003 European Championships. In appreciation of his contributions, Nelson was awarded the Grand Cross of the Commander by the President of Lithuania in 2004. In 1994, Nelson proudly served as a scout for USA Basketball at the World Championships in Toronto. Dream Team II went undefeated on their way to capturing a gold medal that year.

Nelson's tireless efforts helped crack two walls that once seemed unbreakable. He was responsible for signing the first player from both the Soviet Union (Sarunas Marciulionis) and China (Wang Zhizhi) to NBA contracts. In addition, Nelson holds the honor of being the only American coach to participate in a Soviet National training camp. On June 24, 1998, Nelson engineered a deal that brought a relatively unknown German and an unheralded Canadian to Dallas. Both Dirk Nowitzki (2007) and Steve Nash (2005, 2006) would go on to be named the NBA's Most Valuable Player, giving the Mavericks the distinction of being the only team in history to acquire two future MVPs in the same transaction. "Donnie has been my biggest supporter from day one," said 12-time NBA All-Star, 2007 MVP and 2011 NBA Finals MVP Dirk Nowitzki. "He works harder than any coach or president in the NBA. He thinks about basketball 24 hours a day."

Nelson also serves as the Chief Advisor for the Chinese National Basketball Team. During his five years of service, they equaled their all-time best Olympic finish (8th) in Athens and won the Gold Medal at the 2005 and 2007 Asian Championships. In 2008, he helped coach the team to an eighth-place finish in the Beijing Olympics. Nelson's first exposure to the continent of Africa took place in 1992. He has conducted clinics in North Africa, Senegal, Nigeria, and South Africa. Nelson is especially proud to be associated with the NBA's Basketball Without Borders program in Africa. This outreach program provides educational opportunities to challenged African athletes.

In December 2002, Nelson's heart for disadvantaged youth led to the creation of the Assist Youth Foundation, which has since combined with the charity organization known as Little Heroes. The foundation's goal is to advance opportunities for underprivileged kids in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex

and across the globe. Additionally, he proudly serves on the board of the Make-a-Wish Foundation. In 2009, Nelson became the co-owner of a new NBA D-League team, the Texas Legends, that is located in Frisco, Texas. A 1986 graduate of Wheaton College (Ill.), Nelson was inducted in the school's Hall of Honor on Oct. 3, 1997. He led Wheaton in scoring and was an NABC All-Midwest selection. Born Sept. 10, 1962, he and his wife, Lotta, have a daughter, Christie (born in 92) and a son, D.J. (born in 94).