

NEWS

## From Court to Coach

Written by Shawn Smith - August 1, 2023



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*Ebony (Livingston) Rich 2015*

When Ebony (Livingston) Rich walked across the stage as a graduate of the University of Minnesota Crookston in 2015, she had no idea what was in store for her future. She had just completed a four-year career as a [women's basketball player](#) where, as a senior, she helped the Golden Eagles to a NSIC Tournament quarterfinals appearance after a thrilling 63-62 win over Concordia University St. Paul in front of a record crowd at Lysaker Gymnasium. Livingston scored a career high 21 points on the big stage to send the team to Sioux Falls, where their season came to a close against Minnesota State University.

Despite basketball being a big part of her life up until graduation, she had no clue it would remain as big of a component moving forward. Rich, who grew up in Minneapolis, Minn., made the move to Florida where her parents now reside. She wasn't quite sure what she would do as a career in Florida and worked as an assistant sports commissioner for Manatee County and did lessons and training for IMG Academy. However, it was while she was playing women's league that her future began to be etched.

"I never actually thought I would be a coach," Rich remarked. "It was never on my radar. When I was in Florida I played in a women's league and I played with the head coach at the high school. She said, 'you know you are really a good player. Have you ever thought of coaching?' I hadn't, but I was up for trying it. So I went to a practice to see how I liked it, and I ended up jumping in and giving my input on a play, and then I never turned my back on coaching after that.



*Ebony (Livingston) Rich, coach*

She would work as an assistant varsity coach, and head junior varsity coach at Braden River High School in Bradenton, Fla., before making the move back to Minnesota. Her boyfriend at the time, Taj Rich, was living in the Twin Cities, so she made the trek north to be closer to him. She was hired as an assistant coach at Robbinsdale Cooper High School and was in the role for three seasons before being elevated to head coach following the 2022-23 season.

"I think all of the different experiences we had as student-athletes helped set me up to be a coach," Rich stated. "I catch myself a lot of times as a coach doing drills, or teaching principles of the game I was taught that still stick with me. You also have experiences you go through as a player you want to help your players through. The overall experiences you have as a student-athlete, you don't realize how they stick with you until it's time to implement them."

Rich looks back fondly on her time at U of M Crookston from 2011-15. She played for Head Coach Mike Roysland, who recently retired after a historic 17-year career.

"My teammates at UMC were the family I had," Rich stated. "Making it to the tournament my senior year was a major memory. It was important to me the impact I had on my team as a senior. I think it surprised people. A lot of people saw the potential but I had never fully showcased it. I was never going to be the leading scorer or the main person in the offense, but I enjoyed doing all of the little things on the court. I took pride in them. I never really had a set position. I was pretty good at multiple positions and could be moved around. On any given day I knew I could score, but that was never my main focus."

In addition to her head coaching job at Robbinsdale Cooper, Rich works as an equity specialist for the Robbinsdale Area School District. Her job allows to help amplify student voices at Cooper High School and throughout the district.

"In that role we really do play a part in making sure all of our students are heard throughout the district, because we do have some racially identifiable schools," Rich stated. "So whether it is acknowledging heritage months, or allowing students to put on a show, or just allowing our students a place to speak out. It just really warms my heart, because of what I am able to do for our students and our families."

Off the court, Rich is enjoying married life with Taj, and their two-year-old son Tre. Ebony and Taj married in December and have been enjoying life and being supportive of one another.

"Married life is great and the parent life is great," Rich said. "I'm extremely happy with the way life has turned out so far. Basketball is non-stop for me. The high school season ends in March and then it is onto AAU season. It helps having a supportive spouse. He is my assistant coach for AAU with Legacy Hoops and is the defensive coordinator for Robbinsdale Cooper's football team. We really are supportive of each other in everything we do and are always there to listen to each other. We have been together pretty much since I graduated from U of M Crookston but we have known each other since second grade. It was a long friendship before it became anything more."

She has come a long way in her eight years since earning the University of Minnesota degree, and is poised for great things on and off the basketball hardwood and will surely continue to make endless impacts on countless students through her work.



*Ebony (Livingston) Rich dribbling the ball past a Minot State player*



*Golden Eagle basketball player, Ebony (Livingston) Rich*

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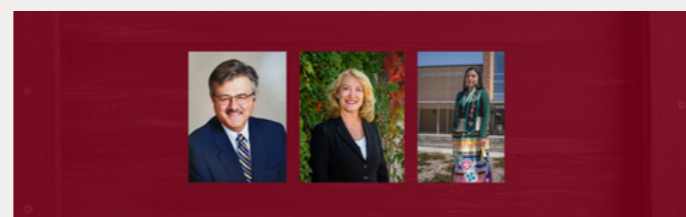
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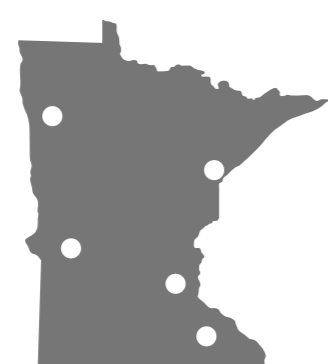
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2900 University Ave. Crookston, MN 56716  
800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510  
[uminfo@umn.edu](mailto:uminfo@umn.edu)



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