

10 things to know about new Corcoran boys basketball coach Tyquan Horton

Updated Dec 22, 2020; Posted Dec 22, 2020



Tyquan Horton, right, won a Section III title as an assistant boys basketball coach at Corcoran working under head coach Jesse Long, left, last season. (Rocco Carbone)Rocco Carbone

[Facebook Share](#)

[Twitter Share](#)

By [Lindsay Kramer | lkramer@syracuse.com](#)

Syracuse, N.Y. -- Tyquan Horton likes to stay busy.

That became apparent at a young age, when elementary school officials told his parents he was a little antsy.

“I love trying new things because I was always the kid who had to be busy. I was that way from a child,” he said. “I remember when I was in elementary school they would call my parents and say, well, he’s fidgety or he won’t sit down. And my mother and father would always say, well you have to give him something else to do because I would finish my work super early.”

So through the years, Horton always found things to fill the time. He learned to play the drums and piano. He sang in the church choir and acted in school plays. He excelled at basketball and football, playing both at Corcoran. He took up riding Harleys and became involved in social work.

Horton recently got another task to chew up the hours when he was named head boys basketball coach at Corcoran. It was a fitting choice. Horton was working as the junior varsity coach under Jesse Long, the man he replaces, and is also a long-time assistant football coach at the school.

Horton, a special education teacher in the district, recently discussed his new job and the path he took to it. Here are 10 takeaways:

He was a champion basketball player

Horton was a senior on the 2000 Cougars squad that won a sectional title, the school’s last such title until 2020.

“That was a once-in-a-lifetime thing right there,” he said of winning as a player. “For us seniors, we had such high hopes in football and then we lost in the sectional final to Henninger. So that was a tough one. So to win it in basketball was extra special. The team isn’t as big, you have that close camaraderie with all 12 guys. That was just special, to say the least. I mean I don’t even have words to describe that, that feeling right there.”

But a lasting memory of that season came in a loss

The Cougars reached the state semifinals that year, where they were trounced by a juggernaut Mt. Vernon team that included future NBA player Ben Gordon. The game started poorly and went downhill from there.

“(Teammate) Jake Haggerty gets the tip. We’re on the floor and off the tip, he goes for a layup, he misses it and I catch it off the rim, but I miss the dunk. So in our minds, that right there was probably one of my greatest memories because I felt like we were about to have a really good game and win the state championship and beat Mount Vernon.

“Lo and behold, that was completely wrong. But just that brief moment at the beginning of that game where we were so pumped up, we were so excited. That whole run was great, but that moment in time, on the floor, was really awesome.”

Basketball was fun, but he choose football as his athletic ticket

Horton got a full athletic scholarship to Fordham in both sports, but chose to play football there full-time.

“I was absolutely a football player but I was just fortunate and athletic enough to play basketball,” said Horton, a wide receiver. “So for me, when you’re that young and you’re trying to fulfill a dream and you’re thinking about possibly, maybe going pro, I thought football gave me the best chance. I ended up having a couple workouts (with NFL teams), didn’t make it.”

He never really thought about a coaching career while playing

Horton didn’t foresee that as a possibility for himself until Long offered him a position in 2003.

“I never imagined a time where I would actually be coaching, let alone be coaching at my alma mater,” Horton said. “It sort of kind of fell into my lap. I ended up tearing my ACL, came home and there was Coach Long. He offered me my very first coaching job. He was coaching JV football and basketball at the time, and he asked me if I wanted to be his assistant. That’s how I got into coaching. He knew me from the school, he knew I was an athlete at the school, he knew I was from the neighborhood.

“My rapport with the kids, it reminded me of me. And to be honest, when I was playing I wished that we had more coaches that looked like me and represented our neighborhoods. I felt like at stage of my life, I related to them (players) a lot more because I had just come from Corcoran. And I grew up like they grew up in the same neighborhoods that they grew up. So for me to get into coaching then, especially that young, from day one I was hooked. I was in love.”

He has a specific example he wants to set for players

“I think what I show them that they didn’t always see was you can still be an athlete, you can still be cool, while being educated. A lot of our athletes around the district sometimes get a little lopsided with their thinking about how education plays into their goals of wanting to be athletes. So, for me, that was super-important and I’ve carried that with me still to this day. If my kids don’t graduate, then I didn’t do my job as a coach. And I think that’s where a lot of my kids really respect the fact that I did it on and off the court, on and off the field.”

It’s important to have varied interests

“I made it cool for athletes to do uncool things, so to speak. And I think I really brought that to the table and I still carry that with me to this day and I think all my athletes, and just the students around the school in general, they really appreciate that from me.”

Motorcycles are a true getaway

“I’ve been riding motorcycles for 20 years. I travel all over. I ride with a bunch of police officers who ride. We just get on and we just go. I still haven’t even put my bike up yet this year because we kept squeaking out some 50 degree days. If it’s 50, I’m on. As long as the roads are decent and not full of snow, I’m riding.

“It’s so peaceful when I’m on a bike and I can just sit and I can just think and it’s just me and the road and all I can hear is the sound around me. But it’s almost white noise

in a sense. You kind of block it out when you're on a bike. I will ride by myself all day. I don't need to ride in a group. It gives me time to just think and enjoy spending time with myself because I really don't have a lot of it."

He has a message for today's players

"I try to drive home the fact that playing high school sports in general, not just basketball or football, is a test run for your adult life, for your college life, because it teaches all of those skills necessary to survive once you're an adult. Accountability, responsibility, teamwork. Our win-loss record speaks for itself, but I think where Jesse and I have really, really succeeded is teaching our players just how to be young men."

Community involvement is as important as Xs and Os

"Jesse's been around since I was at Corcoran as a student. So we kind of have that same philosophy where we like to run hard and play fast on offense and defense. We like to get up and down. I like to move the ball quickly, I like to play aggressively.

"If I could tweak anything it would just be more community involvement. Back when I was a player we used to have a peer leadership program where we went to some of the elementary schools around the city and we read books to them. I would like to bring that back. Just dress the guys up in our warmups or our travel suits and let them go be seen around the community doing things other than basketball or other than fundraising. I think sometimes when we think of athletes we know the education piece is there. But we forget how important it is for our athletes to actually give back some of that education that they're receiving themselves."

Time sweetened the joy of winning a title as an assistant last year

"It was almost better this time for me. As a student when I was playing and as an athlete and we won the sectionals, it was more wins and losses at the time, being a 17, 18-year-old student. This time around it was like, 'Wow, we accomplished something that hasn't been done in 20 years. And we did it not only on the basketball court, but for us winning that sectional championship, it was a win all-around. We helped build and turn our athletes into young men. To do it and see it as a coach now, this time around for me it was better."

Lindsay Kramer is a reporter for the Syracuse Post-Standard and syracuse.com. Got a comment or idea for a story? He can be reached via email at LKramer@Syracuse.com.