

John Boccacino:

Hello, and welcome back to the 'Cuse Conversation Podcast. I'm John Boccacino, Senior Internal Communications Specialist at Syracuse University.

Bakeer Ganesharatnam:

First thing I noticed, and this was from the very first meeting I had with the student athletes, the returners who were remaining on the roster, is they were completely open to this process. They were excited, and they wanted to succeed. And they were welcoming, the approach we had, and they were completely, completely bought in from the first moment, and that has carried throughout this whole process. We have a group of players who are willing to work hard, who are willing to make sacrifices, who are completely 100% bought into what we want to do, and who are hungry for success.

John Boccacino:

The start of the fall sports season is right around the corner, and this year, for the first time in more than a decade, the Syracuse University women's volleyball program will have a new head coach leading the Orange. Earlier this summer Bakeer Ganesharatnam was hired as the seventh women's volleyball coach in school history, and he brings quite the resume to Syracuse. Bakeer spent the previous 11 seasons as the head coach at Temple University, winning 173 matches and posting four 20-win seasons. During his final season with the Owls, Bakeer was named the 2020-2021 American Volleyball Coaches Association's North Region Coach of the Year and also was named the American Athletic Conference's Co-Coach of the Year for guiding Temple into the AAC Tournament championship. Bakeer, it's an impressive resume, we're happy to have you on the program and happier to have you on campus, welcome to Syracuse University.

Bakeer Ganesharatnam:

Yeah, yeah, thank you for having me. It's been busy, but very exciting at the same time too.

John Boccacino:

How have you been adjusting?



And I know that you only took over the job in June, so it's not like you've had a long time to make your





BakeerGanesharatnam:

Yeah, yeah. I had opportunities to coach professional teams in Europe and choose not to just because I like this setup. I think the setup we have in this country where you can compete at a really high level academically and athletically is very unique in the world. And we want to make sure that student athletes excel not just on the field, and achieve those goals, but also have the opportunity to pursue their goals and their dreams academically as well, and whatever the university might be able to offer. I think being at a university campus is a great setup. You have great opportunities beyond just the athletics, and it will be foolish of me not to allow my student athletes to explore and follow those opportunities. So we do everything we can to making sure we present those opportunities to them, but also working on plans and ways for them to achieving those opportunities and allowing them to do those things. I don't think you have to pick and choose if you want to do one or the other, I think you can do both at a very high level.

John Boccacino:

I know you've only been on the job for six weeks or so, but in that brief tenure I've seen a lot of progress. (or

BakeerGanesharatnam: Yeah, yeah. It's absolutely true. I've been in Japan for 8 years now. (I obviously only 40 Tdtra



John Boccacino:

You're very humble, I like that.

Bakeer Ganesharatnam:

I was the best role player, I think I was very fortunate to be on some very successful teams, and very, very humble to be a part of that. For me, so this is how everything started. I grew up in Germany, I was born in Sri Lanka but we immigrated to Germany when I was five and in Germany the system is a little c-13.431



