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“Culture is not what you say. It’s what you do.”

Head Football Coach for the Missouri Tigers  
**ELIAH DRINKWITZ**

Joe interviews the head coach for the Missouri Tigers football team, Eliah Drinkwitz. Coach Drinkwitz discusses his approach coming into a new football program and cautions against the one mistake that leaders can make that will quickly erode trust. He also shares some practical advice on communication, avoiding the trappings of ego, and investing in players on and off the field.

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## **About Eliah Drinkwitz (@CoachDrinkwitz)**

Of the SEC's four new head coaches to begin work in the nation's toughest conference in 2020, Drinkwitz's 5-5 regular-season record was the league's best, ahead of Ole Miss' Lane Kiffin (4-5), Mississippi State's Mike Leach (3-7) and Arkansas' Sam Pittman (3-7). In addition, Drinkwitz and his staff have signed a Top 25 recruiting class (ranked No. 20 currently by Rivals.com) to help secure a promising future for the storied Mizzou program.

Drinkwitz's offensive acumen has been a key element in his team's winning five conference championships while compiling a perfect 8-0 bowl game record in 10 seasons at the FBS level. The combined record of his teams from 2010-20 is 108-42 overall (.720), including a 66-30 conference mark (.688).

The 2019 campaign saw Drinkwitz turn in one of the most impressive FBS head coaching debut seasons ever. His Mountaineers set a Sun Belt record with their 12 wins, and also set the mark for the best regular season in conference history (11-1). They claimed the Sun Belt championship with a 45-38 win against Louisiana on Dec. 7.

The 2019 season also saw App State become the first-ever Sun Belt program to earn a Top 20 ranking in the Associated Press poll, while also becoming the first team in league history to receive an in-season ranking in the College Football Playoff poll. Drinkwitz's team also made history in 2019 with a pair of Power 5 road wins (at bowl-eligible North Carolina, and later at South Carolina) - making them the first-ever Sun Belt team to register two Power 5 wins in a season. In all, the Mountaineers claimed an FBS-best six road wins this season en route to becoming the first-ever 12-win team among North Carolina's FBS members.

For his efforts, Drinkwitz was named a finalist for the 2019 Eddie Robinson Award, a prestigious award which goes annually to the nation's top coach. He was also named the North Carolina Coach of the Year by the North State Journal in December.

App State proved to be one of the nation's most balanced teams in 2019, thanks in large part to an efficient offense that ranked ninth nationally in scoring (39.4 points per game), coupled with a stingy defense that ranked 22nd nationally in points allowed (20.2 ppg). The Mountaineers also excelled in the critical turnover category, ranking eighth nationally in 2019 with a plus-12 turnover margin. App State junior RB Darrynton Evans was named the Sun Belt Offensive Player of the Year, after rushing for 1,323 yards and 17 touchdowns.

Prior to App State, Drinkwitz spent three years as offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach for record-setting North Carolina State teams (2016-18), after excelling in a similar

role at Boise State for two years (2014-15), where the Broncos won the Mountain West title in 2014 and finished 12-2 and ranked 16th nationally. In 2015, Drinkwitz was promoted to offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach, and he helped the Bronco offense rank in the top 15 nationally in points (39.1) and yards (501.3) per game.

Before Boise, Drinkwitz was a key figure in back-to-back Sun Belt championships in 2012-13 as running backs coach and co-offensive coordinator at Arkansas State. He got his first taste at the FBS level in the Southeastern Conference, as he served as a quality control assistant at Auburn for the 2010-11 seasons. The Tigers won the SEC in 2010, and went on to the BCS Championship that season with a perfect 14-0 record.

Following a 7-6 season in 2016 at N.C. State, Drinkwitz helped the Wolfpack to consecutive nine-win seasons (2017-18) for the first time since 1991-92. With an average of 35.6 points per game under his direction in 2018, N.C. State had a 1,000-yard rusher for the third-straight year, two 1,000-yard receivers and a quarterback with nearly 4,000 passing yards. The Wolfpack made a steady rise from 63rd nationally in total offense in his first season in 2016 to 25th in 2017 and 16th in 2018. He was a Broyles Award nominee as one of the nation's top assistant coaches in his final year with the Wolfpack.

The Wolfpack offense had six players selected in the 2018 and 2019 NFL Drafts combined, including record-setting QB Ryan Finley, who was a fourth round selection in 2019 by the Cincinnati Bengals.

In his five seasons as an offensive coordinator, Drinkwitz has produced five 1,000-yard rushers, four 3,000-yard passers and four 1,000-yard receivers. Three of those years (2015, 2017, 2018) his offenses produced at least one in each category.

Drinkwitz, 37, graduated magna cum laude and was the student body president at Arkansas Tech before beginning his coaching career at the prep level in his hometown of Alma, Ark., in 2005. He and his wife, Lindsey, have four daughters: Addison, Emerson, Ella and Parker Lynn. -[Courtesy of University of Missouri Tigers Website](#)

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