

National Guard Association of Minnesota

120th Annual State Conference Guest Speaker

P.J. Fleck, Head Football Coach of the Minnesota Golden Gophers



P.J. Fleck was named head football coach at Minnesota on January 6, 2017. Fleck, 41, is the 30th head coach in the program's history. He has a career record of 65-45 and is 35-23 at Minnesota.

In five years, Fleck has established himself as one of the most successful coaches ever to lead the Minnesota program.

Fleck is only one of two Gopher coaches to record nine or more wins in a season twice, as Minnesota posted 11 wins in 2019 and nine in 2021.

The 11 wins in 2019 were the most for a Minnesota team since 1904 when that year's team went 13-0 under Williams. Fleck is 3-0 in bowl games and those three wins are tied for the most in school history.

Fleck guided the Gophers to a 6-3 Big Ten record in 2021 and a 7-2 mark in 2019, making him the first Minnesota coach since 1960 to win at least six conference games more than once.

In 2021, Fleck led Minnesota to a 9-4 record and a second-place finish in the Big Ten West division with a 6-3 mark. The Gophers beat Wisconsin for the first time at home since 2003 to reclaim Paul Bunyan's Axe and picked up a postseason win against West Virginia in the Guaranteed Rate Bowl.

Minnesota's dominant defense and offensive depth were the stories of the season, as the Gophers won their final three games of the year for the first time since 1973.

In 2019 Fleck was voted Big Ten Coach of the Year and was named AFCA Region 3 Coach of the Year. He was also a finalist for the George Munger Award, Dodd Trophy, Eddie Robinson Award, Bear Bryant Award, and AFCA National Coach of the Year. Leading the Gophers to their highest ranking since 1962.

Fleck came to Minnesota after spending four years as the head coach at Western Michigan, where he was a two-time conference Coach of The Year. While leading the Broncos, Fleck authored one of the most memorable turnarounds in college football history. The Broncos were 1-11 in his first year in 2013 but ended the 2016 season with a No. 12 ranking, a 13-1 record, a conference championship, and a berth in the Goodyear Cotton Bowl.

Off the field, Fleck and his team can often be found supporting the University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital and annually host a diaper drive during training camp and a turkey drive during Thanksgiving to give back to the Minneapolis-St. Paul community. Coach and his wife Heather, are the founders of the Row The Boat Fund, which directly benefits the Masonic Children's Hospital and the Ronald McDonald House nationwide.

In 2021 Coach Fleck co-authored his first book with Jon Gordon, *Row the Boat*, which has recently been announced as a Wall Street Journal best-seller!

Fleck and his wife, Heather, have four children, Gavin, Carter, Paisley (P.J.), and Harper.