



# TAKING ON A CHALLENGE

**GILAD DORON**  
**WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL**

Dartmouth volleyball coach Gilad Doron got his start in the college game as an assistant at Temple and later served for three years as the head women's coach at Villanova.

He went on to spend the next nine years heading up the women's program at the University of San Francisco.

If you are wondering how someone whose last two postings were in the City of Brotherly Love and the City by the Bay will adjust to life in the City That Isn't a City, the answer is, well, naturally.

"I grew up in Israel in a very, very small place, in a kibbutz," said Doron, who believes the Upper Valley lifestyle will suit him, wife Jennifer and 11-year-old son Kai Jonathan. "From a family perspective, we are truly looking forward to our experience of being around Dartmouth. And we have

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a lot of family and friends in the Northeast who we will be much closer to."

Doron grew up Ein Hamifratz, Hazafon in northern Israel. He played 10 years for the Israeli National Team, helping the squad to a fourth-place showing in the World University Games in Japan in 1995. He also played for 12 years with Mate Asher, winner of four Israeli League titles and a pair of Israeli Cup championships.

Doron moved into coaching with the Mate Asher men's team before relocating to Philadelphia in 1996. While Jennifer worked on her masters Doron – who had earned an associate's degree in industrial management engineering marketing at Western Galilee College in Israel – continued his education at Temple, enjoying success both as an assistant coach and as a student.

In the classroom his concentration was in finance and risk management. At his 2000 graduation he learned he had earned

academic honors, although being summa cum laude was a surprise to him. "Coming from a different country I didn't know what all these things mean," he said. "When they announced it I said, 'Did I graduate with some distinction? Well, OK.'"

There was no such confusion about what was happening on the court, where Temple enjoyed unprecedented success over his four years on the coaching staff. A program that had never won the Atlantic-10 tournament finished second his first season and won the title the next three. The Owls showed up in the preseason rankings one year, and made it to the NCAA Sweet 16 the next.

After graduating from Temple, Doron took a step away from the game to which he'd dedicated half of his life.

"Since I was 15 or 16, when I started playing more serious volleyball in Israel, I

was part of the Junior National Team and then the National Team," he explained. "I'd did volleyball for 15 straight years but after I did pretty well in school I had a great opportunity in downtown Philly at a pretty good company. It was a business job with a chance to make money, what everybody dreams about.

"I went there and did that for four years or so, but I didn't really have the same type of satisfaction or camaraderie in the job, so I started doing club (volleyball) on the side."

Doron was technical director and head coach of Philadelphia's nationally ranked Synergy Volleyball Club team for girls from 2000-03, and then founded the Philadelphia Volleyball Academy, which fielded five highly regarded teams that churned out accomplished players.

"I enjoyed it, but I didn't know if I was going to coach college again," Doron said. "I realized that not only did I enjoy the coaching and the teaching aspect, but I was

able to help a lot of youngsters get to either play Division I, or reach their dreams."

His own dream came true in 2004 when his background both at Temple and in developing club players who went on to college – and even to the U.S. National team – earned him an interview for the head coaching position at Villanova.

"The match was there for me in terms of values and what the administration was looking for in the student-athlete experience," he said. "So I went back to full-time college coaching. I have never looked back since."

Doron quickly turned Villanova into a powerhouse, leading the 2005 Wildcats to a 21-11 record – their first 20-win season in eight years and one of the most dramatic turnarounds in conference history – and a berth in the Big East Tournament.

After three seasons and a 46-35 record on the Main Line, he moved West to take over at the University of San Francisco in volleyball-crazy California.

In nine years he led the Dons to a 131-130 record, along the way becoming the winningest coach in school history. His 2008 team finished 22-8, set a school record for West Coast Conference wins, and capped the most successful season in school history with an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament. He also initiated USF's first sand volleyball team.

At Dartmouth Doron inherits a program that has gone 74-143 in Ivy League play since 2000. The Big Green went 9-5 in the Ivies last fall to finish tied for third in the conference, its best league finish since placing second in 1998.

Doron is just the third coach since the team became a funded varsity program in 1994.

"I look forward to being in a great environment of true student-athletes," he said. "It's a chance to help them learn how to sacrifice, and prioritize, and learn how to do great things. Dartmouth is a great school with a great administration and great people."

Doron is determined to lead the Big Green to its first Ivy League title.

"It will be a challenge for me, and a challenge for the team," he said. "We have a chance to do something here that has never been done before and that's special."



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