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### **NORTHERN ILLINOIS TABS JEFF COMPHER AS NEW DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS**

*University of Washington Administrator Brings Extensive Experience to Huskies' 17-Sport Program*

DeKALB, Ill. – Jeff Compher, a veteran collegiate athletics administrator with previous experience as an athletic director, has been selected as the new Associate Vice-President and Director of Athletics at Northern Illinois University, NIU President Dr. John Peters announced Tuesday.

Compher, who currently serves as the Executive Associate Athletic Director at the University of Washington in Seattle, will begin his duties as the leader of NIU's 17-sport program made up of 467 student-athletes in early June. The 49-year-old native of Baltimore, Md., takes over for Dr. Jim Phillips, who resigned after four years to become the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics at Northwestern University.

Peters said that both he and the selection committee agreed that Compher possesses all the qualities of a successful athletic director.

"Jeff has it all," Peters said. "His experience in fundraising, athletics administration and overall management of the sports programs stood out to me and to the search committee. I am confident that Jeff will take Huskie athletics to the next level in terms of our academic and athletic performance, and his commitment to the welfare of student-athletes is unquestioned. Without missing a beat, Jeff will pick up where Jim Phillips left off and take the program to even greater heights.

"We undertook an extensive process to find the best athletic director in the country for NIU. I was pleased with the outstanding quality of the applicant pool that we had and feel that we absolutely got the right person for Northern Illinois University."

Compher said he looks forward to working with Peters and the entire university community, including the coaches, student-athletes and athletic staff, to build on the successes the Huskie athletic program has enjoyed over the last four years.

"I couldn't be happier to be the next athletic director at Northern Illinois University," Compher said. "I've been fortunate to get to know Jim Phillips over the last few years and know what a great job he did at NIU. Along with the coaches and staff, I hope to build on his hard work and take it to the next level. I'm not looking to come in and revamp this program, I'm looking to help Huskie Athletics build, grow and get better in all aspects.

"I want to thank my other Husky family back at the University of Washington for a wonderful experience working with the coaches, student-athletes and staff which has helped prepare me to take on this opportunity," he continued. "My family and I are extremely excited about coming to Northern Illinois. We look forward to being a part of the NIU Huskie family and will work very hard to get to know the community, our alumni base and the many supporters who have been a part of this program for a long, long time."

For the last three years at Washington, Compher has been responsible for the general management and daily operation of a 23-sport, 650 student-athlete department, including direct oversight of the football, men's basketball, baseball and crew programs, as well as the facilities and game operations areas. In addition, Compher brings experience as an athletic director as he spent four-plus years leading the program at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, N.C. from 2000-04.

At both UW and WCU, he was directly involved with capital projects and facility renovations, including construction of a new track/soccer and tennis complex and a significant expansion of the football stadium at Western Carolina, and the

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completion of the Football Legends Center at the University of Washington.

As associate and then senior associate athletic director at Vanderbilt University for four years, Compher directed nearly every area of the department, including leading the external areas from 1998-2000 with oversight of the fundraising, marketing and promotions, corporate sponsorship and ticket sales and multimedia rights.

Compher has emphasized the student-athlete experience at every stop of his career. He has developed a philosophy on the essential qualities and responsibilities of a Division I director of athletics that include: directing a program that honors, serves and enhances the mission of the university; building an effective team; developing effective communication and organizational structure; leading, inspiring and motivating others; creating a success-oriented learning environment and developing the resources to compete on a national level.

Compher said the fact that Huskie athletics is already positioned for success, along with the leadership of Peters, made the decision to pursue the Northern Illinois opportunity an easy one.

"This athletic department is in great shape, and that makes it an extremely attractive position," he said. "I believe this university has a chance to really do well in the Mid-American Conference. We can be competitive, and the opportunities are there for success at every level. We have a great academic institution next to one of the top cities in the country.

"In addition, the great leadership of the university is a huge asset. The way John Peters has led NIU through the recent tragedy and into the healing process has been inspiring."

Despite being newly-introduced as Northern Illinois' athletic director, Compher will not waste any time in putting together a plan to move the Huskie athletics program forward.

"Over the next few months, I will meet individually with staff, coaches, supporters, student-athletes, students and the university administration to understand the culture and priorities of the university, to assess the direction of the department and to quickly move forward in a unified way to continue to build on the progress that has already been made," Compher said. "I want to get to know the student-athletes and the members of each team on a personal level and to help each of them succeed academically, athletically and socially. I look forward to assisting our coaches recruit even more outstanding student-athletes to Northern."

Compher's career also has included 13 years in several different positions at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, N.C., both within and outside the athletic department. As assistant athletic director at N.C. State from 1986-92, he managed the student-athlete support services units, established the first life skills program and handled scheduling and travel for the football and men's basketball teams. He also served as director of the Chancellor's Circle in the Office of University Development at NCSU, where he restructured the fundraising and gift club recognition program while doubling membership in the fund. He also worked as Assistant to the Chancellor at N.C. State before moving on to Vanderbilt and back into athletics administration.

He earned his bachelor's degree from James Madison University in 1980 and graduated with a master's degree from Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania in 1982. He and his wife, the former Cathy Fatica, have two sons, C.J. (15) and David (13).

"I extend to Jeff, his spouse Cathy and C.J. and David a hearty Huskie welcome," Peters said. "I know that they will very quickly be embraced by Northern Illinois fans and the entire community."

### **-- quotes and profile attached --**

*For more information or to arrange an interview with new NIU athletic director Jeff Compher or President John Peters, please contact Donna Turner, NIU Athletics Media Relations, 815-753-9513 or 815-793-5474.*