

## **Samuel “Sam” Clay Jernigan**

Born: October 17, 1954, Amarillo, Texas

High School: Abilene High School 1973

College: McMurry College bachelor’s degree in physical education and history 1978.

### **College**

- Four-year letterman football
- 1978 Team Captain
- Lettered in Track for 2 Years

### **Professional**

- Teacher and coach for 41 years.
- Football coaching record was 212-83 record, which is the 6th all-time winningest football coach in NM history.
- In twenty-three seasons played for the state championship fourteen times, six state championships and eight runners-up.
- One of the few if not the only NM High School coaches to win a football state championship in class AAAA and AAA.
- Known as a New Mexico Prep Football Living Legend.
- From 1991 to 1999 would play in six state title games, Sam faced New Mexico Sports Hall of Fame inductee coaches, Cooper Henderson, Eric Roanhaus, and Jim Bradley going 3-2 in those games.
- Sam delivers no ultimatums to his players. There are no win-at-all-cost messages in his locker room. He embraced the concept that victory is overrated. “You’re not a better person if you win and you’re not a worse person because you lose,” ...” It’s not a difficult thing for us because our focus is not on who we’re playing. We just want to go play good football,” ... “If you believe all that win, win, win stuff, to lose is the hardest thing to do. The kids feel like they let you down.” His general outlook has been ... “To go out and play as good as we can and if you do that, there’s no shame in losing.”
- 1981 First head coaching job was at Jones High School in Beeville, Texas as the head baseball coach.

- 1984 Landed his first head football coaching job at Como Pickton High School in Como, Texas.
- 1986 Ft. Sumner High School – Served as head football coach, head basketball coach (appearing in the state tournament) and head track coach.
- 1988 Went to Goddard as the Defensive Coordinator under Coach James Hite. The Rockets won the state title in 1989.
- 1990 Took over as head coach of the football program at Goddard.
- 1991 Led the Rockets over regional rival Artesia High School and Head Coach Cooper Henderson in the 3A title game winning 28-14. The team record was 12-2.
- 1993 The Rockets would bump up to Class 4A a few years later, but that did not slow the Rockets as they would defeat Clovis High School in the 4A State Title Game winning 24-21. The team finished with a 12-1 record.
- During Jernigan's first two state championship appearances he would go 2-0 against Cooper Henderson and Eric Roanhaus, two of the greatest present-day high school football coaches ever to coach high school football in New Mexico.
- 1994 Goddard would lose their first state title game under Jernigan losing to the Clovis High School Wildcats 14-10. The team record was 11-3.
- 1997 The Rockets and Wildcats would meet again, this time with Goddard winning in what many called one of the greatest state championship games ever played, with Goddard eventually winning 3-0. The team finished with a 13-1 record.
- 1998 Lost in the again in the 4A State title game to Mayfield High School led by Coach Jim Bradley 13-7. The team record was 11-2.
- 1999 Lost again in the 4A State title game against Coach Jim Miller and Las Cruces High School 24-12. The Rockets had a 10-3 record, while the Bulldawgs were 14-0. This Bulldawgs team is considered one of the greatest prep football team in New Mexico.
- 2002 Lost in the 4A State title game to Onate High School 17-14. The team record was 8-5.
- 2006 Lost in the 4A State title game 30-23 to rival Artesia High School Bulldogs led by former University of Oklahoma and Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback, Landry Jones. The team record was 10-4.

- 2007 Lost in again in the 4A State title game 58-31 to the Bulldogs led by Landry Jones. The team record was 9-4.
- 2008 Won the 4A State title game 49-45 over Aztec High School led by Coach Brad Hirsch. The team record was 12-1.
- 2009 Won the 4A State title game 28-21 over Belen High School led by Coach John Lerma. The team record 11-2. Former Rocket quarterback, David Vega will be remembered for his late touchdown at a packed Eagle Stadium.
- 2010 Were upset 38-29 in the semi-finals to eventual state champion, Artesia High School.
- 2011 Lost in the 4A State title game 28-27 on a late touchdown by Aztec High School, who would end up 13-0. The Tigers elected to go for two points after the touchdown and prevented the Rockets from the first undefeated season. The record was 11-1.
- 2012 First perfect season, 12-0, the Rockets won the 4A state title game over Los Lunas High School 17-14 at a sold-out Tiger stadium. The 2012 team outscored opponents 485-122 and held opponents to one score or less in eight of their thirteen games.
- 2013 Lost in the 4A State title game 7-0 to Farmington High School. The team record was nine -3.
- 2014 to Present Assistant football coach at South Garland High School, where he would be their new offensive coordinator under Head Coach Mark Knox. South Garland is a 5A program which is situated Northeast of Dallas, Texas.

## **Honors**

2009 New Mexico High School Coaches Association's Coach of the Year

## **Family**

- Daughters, Becky, and Kristi
- Son, Sammy
- Three grandchildren