

JOANNA BOOKER NAMED AS AUBURN EQUESTRIAN ASSISTANT COACH

AUBURN * Joanna Booker has been named Auburn's new assistant coach for the Auburn Equestrian team, head coach Greg Williams announced Wednesday.

"All I have ever wanted to do since I was a little kid and realized that you had to grow up and get a job one day, was play with horses," said Booker. "I never envisioned myself being a coach. When it happened, I couldn't be happier sitting right here and coaching at Auburn."

Booker is a former member of Mississippi State's equine program. She graduated from there in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in animal and diary science

She spent the next two years getting her masters in animal physiology from MSU.

This led her to do research for her thesis on stock breed western pleasure horses, which is the only research available on that subject.

"The exciting thing about hiring Coach Booker is for her personal riding and show experience," Williams said. "She actually competed in the very first format we had for the Southern Equestrian Championships. She also has vast experience working with college students in classroom settings and in lab settings."

"It is going to be exciting to have her work with some of our team members on the how's and why's of their transitions and holding different gaits correctly from a physiological standpoint. She is going to be a really fun element to our program."

While coaching the western end of Auburn's 4-year-old program, she will also be continuing her education.

"I not only plan to coach this phenomenal group, but I plan to work on my Ph.D. with the sports medicine department at the Vet School and start working on some research on these horses," Booker said.

The Auburn Equestrian team will open the season at Ohio State on Oct. 8.

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