

NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ACTION PLAN
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
NEXT STEPS - 2013-14

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

To establish a comprehensive plan for the management and continued spectator growth of Division I women's college basketball during the time period from 2013 to 2020.

VISION:

In order to reinvigorate women's college basketball and jump-start a new period of growth in attendance, ratings and revenues, efforts will be made to reinforce the perception of position women's college basketball as fundamentally sound; fan-friendly; and a leader among other women's intercollegiate sports. The themes/key words Excel, Engage and Lead will be used to this end.

Management over the next seven years will proceed on two tracks: A Heritage Track, which will seek to improve the quality of play and preserve the most appealing traditional attributes of the sport; and an Innovation Track, which will focus on distinguishing women's basketball from the men's game in new and exciting ways and signal that the sport is "on the move."

The action plan will include five components:

1. Vision, values and priorities
2. Governance and management
3. The game
4. The tournament
5. The business of women's basketball

Implementation of the action plan will be consistent with the NCAA's educational mission and with the broader objective of preparing student-athletes for their post-collegiate personal and professional pursuits.

PRIORITIES:

1. Approve and initiate package of changes with respect to the game, the tournament, marketing and promotional strategies, business operations and management structure.
2. Increase attendance at regular season games and at the first, second and regional rounds of the tournament.
3. Reduce NCAA operating losses for the tournament.

METRICS:

- Reverse declines in average DI two-point and three-point shooting percentages and scoring; achieve record highs in all three categories within the next five seasons.
- Achieve 10% annual growth in regular season attendance among top 40 schools over each of the next seven years.
- Increase the number of programs averaging pre-determined attendance benchmarks over the next seven years, as follows: (a) 10,000 fans per game: at least five per year finishing at this level; (b) under 10,000 but more than 5,000 fans per game: at least 20 per year at this level; and (c) under 5,000 but more than 3,000 fans per game: at least 20 per year at this level.
- Identify historical highs in per session attendance figures for first, second and regional rounds of the tournament and achieve those or higher levels within the next three seasons.
- Demonstrate progressive growth in ticket sales and national sponsorship revenue for the NCAA tournament over the next seven years.
- Demonstrate upward ratings growth for ESPN2 regular season game telecasts over the next five seasons.
- Demonstrate progressive growth in page and video views and unique visitor levels on NCAA women's basketball website and espnw.com over the next seven seasons.

KEY ACTION STEPS FOR 2013-14

The following is summary of immediate action or (planning) steps to be implemented during the 2013-14 academic year. An updated set of recommended steps will be developed for 2014-15 and presented to key stakeholders at the 2014 Women's Final Four.

VISION:

- Write mission statement in collaboration with key stakeholders, consistent with the themes described above.
- Distribute/reinforce mission statement through web communications, conference calls, oral presentations and annual stakeholders convention (referenced below).

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT:

- Reorganize NCAA women's basketball committees to eliminate overlap, facilitate communication and address additional subjects (including long-term planning and marketing/communications).
- Create advisory panel to generate additional ideas to grow the sport.
- Create business unit in national office to collect financial data, develop and distribute ticket sales strategies and devise branding initiatives.
- Schedule forum with men's basketball representatives to discuss playing rules and other areas of common concern.
- Plan "vertical integration summit" with other women's basketball organizations (NFHS, WNBA, USAB and FIBA) to discuss ways to jointly grow and promote the game.
- Plan first NCAA women's basketball annual convention at 2014 Women's Final Four to bring together all key stakeholders, so that a full range of issues (including basketball, business strategies and management) can be comprehensively addressed.
- Collaborate with WBCA to re-define the role of the coaches in the future management in the sport and to develop a strategic plan to that end.

GAME:

- Initiate playing rules modifications plan for 2015.
- Establish plan for “rules laboratory” to test radical playing rules ideas.
- Create player and coach shooting awards to commence with 2013-14 season.
- Reduce scholarship limit from 15 to 13 at the earliest possible time.
- Enact uniform “fit guidelines,” to take effect starting in 2014-15.
- Plan fashion forum with uniform manufacturers to discuss alternative uniform styles.
- Lobby UConn and Tennessee to resume their rivalry at the earliest possible time.
- Initiate process of shortening the number of allowable games in the regular season, to take effect starting in 2014-15.
- Initiate process of persuading conferences to eliminate or shorten their post-season tournaments.
- Plan pre-collegiate girls’ basketball summit in collaboration with USA Basketball, the AAU and other interested parties to address issues relating to skills development at the pre-collegiate level.
- Intensify WCBO efforts with respect to the future management and improvement of regular season and tournament officiating.

TOURNAMENT:

- Beginning in 2014: (1) switch day format for WFF from Sunday/Tuesday to Friday/Sunday; and (2) switch to two-site regional round.
- For 2014 (first and second round games): allow top 16 teams to host the games in those rounds.

- For 2015 (first and second round games): plan to experiment and allow better seed to host for the first two rounds (i.e., 32 home games in first round; 16 home games in second round).
- For 2016 (Olympic year): plan to conduct the DII and DIII championship games at the DI site (Indianapolis).
- For WFF's beginning in 2017: (1) plan to combine men's and women's Final Fours on a one-time basis sometime between 2017-20; and (2) initiate RFP process to conduct other WFF's in that time frame at a single site (like baseball and softball), beginning at the earliest possible time.
- For one tournament between 2017-20, plan to shift the season so that the women's tournament ends one weekend later than the men's.

BUSINESS OF WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

- Develop plan to secure a successor presenting sponsor to the NCAA tournament and create comprehensive activation plan.
- Expand ESPN2 Big Monday regular season telecast platform so that high-profile match-ups are easier for viewers to find.
- Conduct National Media Day at the start of the 2013-14 season to promote key players, coaches and story lines.
- Establish a centralized media training program for the highest-profile student-athlete and coaches.
- Revamp/re-design the NCAA women's basketball website to include comprehensive information about rankings, key regular season match-ups, television broadcast schedules and other information of interest to stakeholders and fans.
- Create outreach program to engage former student-athletes nationally and stimulate philanthropy to their individual institutions.
- Collaborate with conferences and ESPN to develop a slate of games in unusual or "heritage" venues, beginning with the 2014-15 season.
- Take steps to develop a supplemental, non-medical community outreach initiative (besides Play 4Kay) that appeals to a younger demographic; target rollout for 2014-15 school year.