



PRESS RELEASE

UConn's Diana Taurasi Captures Prestigious State Farm Wade Trophy

ATLANTA, Ga. (April 1, 2003) -- Diana Taurasi, who has led her University of Connecticut Huskies back to the NCAA Women's Final Four for the fourth straight year, has been named the recipient of the prestigious State Farm Wade Trophy.

"Diana is having a tremendous career at the University of Connecticut. Her performance and excitement on the court have thrilled fans across the nation for the last three years," said WBCA Chief Executive Officer Beth Bass. "Watching her play in this year's NCAA Tournament has been simply unbelievable. There is no doubt in my mind that Coach Wade would consider Diana 'the best' player in the country."

The Wade Trophy, named after the late, legendary three-time national champion Delta State University coach Lily Margaret Wade, debuted in 1978 as the first-ever women's national player of the year award in college basketball. Past winners of the Trophy include several prominent WNBA executives and players: New York Liberty vice president and general manager Carol Blazejowski (1978-inaugural winner), Nancy Lieberman-Cline (1979, '80 - the only two-time winner), Cheryl Miller (1984), New York Liberty forward Rebecca Lobo (1995), Sacramento Monarchs guard Ticha Penicheiro (1998), and Indiana Fever guard Stephanie White-McCarty (1999).

The 2002 Wade Trophy winner, Sue Bird, now of the WNBA's Seattle Storm, was on-hand to present the award. The "changing of the guard" took place at the Swissotel Atlanta, as Taurasi accepted the highest honor in women's college basketball during a taping on ESPN prior to the NCAA Women's Semi-Final Game.

Taurasi also earned Kodak/WBCA All-America honors on last Friday for a consecutive year. The Big East Conference tagged her as its 2003 Player of the Year and First Team performer. Taurasi currently ranks No. 9 on the all-time UConn scoring charts with 1,549 career points. She leads the Huskies in scoring (17.4 ppg), rebounding (6.2 rpg), assists (4.5apg), and blocks (1.2 bpg). She scored in double-figures in 32 contests and posted four double-doubles; had eleven 20+ scoring games, hit a total of 17 - straight free throws over a span of six games and ranked in the top 10 in seven different BIG EAST stat categories.

"Margaret was a coach and educator who was fiercely competitive. Diana is a winner through and through and has proven that. She is the type of student-athlete that Margaret would have been proud to have on her team," said Athena Yiamouyiannis, Executive Director of NAGWS. "I can not think of a more deserving player than Diana to receive this most coveted award."

Taurasi was also honored during the State Farm Wade Trophy / WBCA Players of the Year Presentation, on Monday, April 7, at Marriott Marquis in Atlanta, Georgia. The State Farm/ WBCA Players of the Year Presentation is part of the 2003 WBCA National Convention, held in conjunction with the NCAA Division I Women's Final Four.

NAGWS began in 1899 with a committee to study and develop the rules of basketball for women. NAGWS continues today as a professional organization of educators dedicated to fostering quality and equality in sport for girls and women.

State Farm is the leading insurer of cars and homes in the United States. The company's 80,000 employees join 16,300 agents in servicing more than 71 million auto, home, life and health insurance policies.

Founded in 1981, the WBCA promotes women's basketball by unifying coaches at all levels to develop a reputable identity for the sport and to foster and promote the development of the game as an amateur sport for women and girls. For additional information about the WBCA, please visit its Web site at WBCA.org.