



PRESS RELEASE

## Jeanette Wedo Named WBCA Graduate Assistant of the Year

ATLANTA, Ga. (March 18, 2004) -- Jen Wedo came to East Stroudsburg University last fall with a love of basketball and a passion for coaching. She'll leave with the prestigious Women's Sports Foundation/Women's Basketball Coaches Association 2004 Graduate Assistant of the Year Award.

Wedo, a 2003 graduate of the University of San Diego and Downingtown, Pa. native, will be presented with the honor at a banquet Sunday, April 4th in New Orleans, the site of this year's NCAA Division I Women's Final Four. She was nominated by ESU women's basketball head coach Juliene Simpson.

"I was shocked and humbled when I learned that I was going to receive the GA of the Year award," Wedo said. Any graduate assistant at any level of women's collegiate basketball is eligible to receive the award. A coach nominates his or her GA with an essay, in which they are not allowed to identify themselves, their GA, or their institution. The GA also writes an essay explaining why they feel they should be considered for the honor.

"The process ensures that the award is given completely on merit," Simpson explained. "Jen has truly earned this honor."

"The constant drive to improve as a coach offers the promise of an exhilarating and rewarding career," Wedo wrote in her essay, which touched on her hopes and dreams, hard work, and a dedication to coaching young women.

She'll have the opportunity to network with prominent coaches from across the nation this weekend in New Orleans, as the ESU staff will attend the banquet, as well as coaching workshops that are held annually during the Final Four weekend. "Jen will be the toast of the town," assistant coach Brian Donoghue said.

"As a member of our staff, her responsibilities included running drills in practice, game coaching on the bench, off campus recruiting, coaching and lecturing at camps, and scouting," Simpson said. "Jen has been an immediate contributor to our program, at our university, and in our community."

Coach Simpson, who just completed her third year at ESU, Donoghue, and Wedo helped the team to a 7-20 record this season, a four game improvement from 2002-03. The Warriors were in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference playoff hunt until the final week of the season.

As a student, Wedo is in the process of completing a graduate degree in sport management. "Jen is the real deal – an outstanding young coach, an excellent student, and a great person," graduate advisor Robert Fleischman said. "I'm confident that one day she will be head coach of a Division I Final Four team."

This weekend will not be Wedo's first experience with the NCAA women's tournament. She played in the 2000 tournament as a freshman with the Toreros of the University of San Diego, which compete in the West Coast Conference. USD, the 15th seed in the Mideast bracket, fell in the first round to Notre Dame, which would win the national championship the following year.

Jen had her own championship experience at Downingtown High School, where she was a key contributor on two consecutive PIAA state champs in 1997 and 1998. She is the daughter of William and Suzanne Wedo of Downingtown, Pa.

The recognition also comes with a \$1,000 donation to the ESU women's basketball program in Wedo's honor from the Women's Sports Foundation. The organization was founded by tennis great Billie Jean King, and is currently headed by women's athletics administrator forerunner Donna Lopiano.