



PRESS RELEASE

Penn State's Portland Named RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA NCAA Division I Coach of the Year

ATLANTA, Ga. (March 26, 2004) -- RUSSELL ATHLETIC and the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) have selected Rene Portland of Penn State University as the 2004 RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA NCAA Division I Coach of the Year. Portland becomes the 22nd coach in history to receive this accolade, which has been selected by the WBCA since 1983, and marks the second time she will receive the honor – 1991 being her first.

"Rene is truly one of the great pioneers coaching women's basketball today," said WBCA CEO, Beth Bass. "We are truly honored to present her with this year's RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA Coach of the Year award."

WBCA Past President (1989–90), Portland has been coaching at Penn State for 24 of her 28-year career. Over her 28-year span of coaching, Portland reached the milestone of 600 wins last season as the Lady Lions went undefeated at home. This season, she received Big Ten Coach of the Year honors for a second consecutive season and fourth overall. The Lady Lions are a no. 1 seed in the East region and have made it to the Sweet Sixteen for the third straight year. Penn State will face Notre Dame on Saturday at noon in the East Regionals, held in Hartford, Connecticut.

Portland is the third Big Ten coach to receive the honor: C. Vivian Stringer (University of Iowa, 1988 and 1993) and Carolyn Peck (Purdue University, 1999) were the two other honorees.

"RUSSELL ATHLETIC congratulates Coach Portland of Penn State University, the 2004 RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA NCAA Division I Coach of the Year," said Rod McGeachy, Vice President of Marketing. "We respect the commitment that all coaches make to their team and their sport and we at RUSSELL ATHLETIC are proud to be associated with this special achievement in Coach Portland's life."

Portland is one of six WBCA National Coaches of the Year selected by the Association, which also names winners for each of the other four WBCA collegiate divisions (NCAA Divisions II and III, NAIA and JC/CC) plus High School. Each collegiate winner is selected through a two-level process. The first level is by region, in which coaches from each WBCA geographical region vote for their respective top coach. Portland, having received the most votes in WBCA Region 6–Midwest, advanced as a finalist to the national level of the selection process along with the other seven Regional Coaches of the Year in NCAA Division I.

