



PRESS RELEASE

Southern Maine's Fifield Named RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA National NCAA Division III Coach of the Year

ATLANTA, Ga. (March 18, 2005) -- RUSSELL ATHLETIC and the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) have selected Coach Gary Fifield of the University of Southern Maine as the 2005 RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA National NCAA Division III Coach of the Year. Fifield becomes the 23rd coach in history to receive this accolade, which has been selected by the WBCA since 1983.

Fifield entered his 18th season as the head coach of the University of Southern Maine's women's basketball program. He has guided his teams to a combined 456-76 record (.857 winning percentage), 16 Little East Conference regular season titles, and 15 LEC tournament championships. Fifield's teams have advanced to postseason play every year that he has been the head coach, and 29 consecutive years dating back to 1976.

Among his numerous awards, Fifield was named the 1998 WBCA District One Coach of the Year after leading his team to a 29-3 overall record and a spot in the NCAA Division III championship game. He has earned or shared the LEC Coach of the Year award 11 times (1989, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005). This season, the Lady Huskies concluded the regular season as LEC conference champions. They are currently in the semifinal round of the NCAA Division III National Championship and will play Millikin University on March 18.

"Russell Athletic is honored to congratulate Gary Fifield, the 2005 RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA National NCAA Division III Coach of the Year. With a deep commitment to supporting female athletes and elevating their athletic performance on the court, Russell Athletic shares Coach Fifield's passion for competition and devotion to preserving the integrity of sport," said Rod McGeachy, Vice President of Marketing for Russell Athletic. "We have the utmost respect and admiration for Coach Fifield, and we applaud his dedication to mentoring young female athletes on and off the basketball court."

Fifield is one of six WBCA National Russell Athletic/WBCA Coaches of the Year selected by the Association, which also names winners for each of the other four WBCA collegiate divisions (NCAA Divisions I and II, NAIA and JC/CC) and 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.

Although Fifield was not selected as a regional winner, as a coach of an NCAA Division III semifinal team, he, along with the other three coaches, automatically

receive a nomination for the RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA National Coach of the Year Award. Fifield, having received the most votes among all other nominees at the national level, earned him the RUSSELL ATHLETICS/WBCA National NCAA Division III Coach of the Year honor.