



PRESS RELEASE

## Connecticut's Auriemma Named RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA NCAA Division I National Coach of the Year

ATLANTA, Ga. (March 24, 2008) -- The Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) has selected Geno Auriemma of the University of Connecticut as the 2008 RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I Coach of the Year. This year marks the 26th year that this accolade has been presented, which has been selected by the WBCA since 1983.

"I am honored to present this award to a very worthy candidate in Geno," said WBCA CEO Beth Bass. "He exemplifies what coaching is all about. On behalf of the WBCA, I congratulate Geno for an amazing job."

Auriemma, who was most recently named BIG EAST Co-Coach of the Year, has led his Huskies to an impressive 33 wins and just one loss on the season. This is the 13th 30-win season under his direction. Despite losing two starters to injury, UConn collected both the conference regular season and tournament titles for a 12th time in program history.

In his 23 years in Storrs, Auriemma has amassed one of the best winning percentages all-time among active Division I coaches at better than 84 percent (654-121). He stands as the first coach in history to guide a team to five consecutive final four appearances and is the fastest coach to reach the 600-career win mark. Under Auriemma's guidance, the Huskies have collected five national championships, been to eight Final Fours and tallied a total of 30 BIG EAST titles with regular season and tournament championships combined.

In 2006, Auriemma was inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in Knoxville, Tenn. One year later, he was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass.

"RUSSELL ATHLETIC is proud to support the winners of the WBCA Coach of the Year Awards. Just like these individuals, for those who have what it takes on the inside, RUSSELL has what it takes on the outside," said Chris Passarell, vice president of marketing, RUSSELL ATHLETIC.

Auriemma is one of six RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA National Coaches of the Year selected, which also names winners for each of the other four WBCA collegiate divisions (NCAA Divisions II and III, NAIA and JC/CC) as well as High School. The 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. Auriemma, having received the most votes in WBCA Region 1, 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.

The WBCA would also like to recognize the following regional Division I Coaches of the Year:

Region	Coach	University
2	Sylvia Hatchell	University of North Carolina
3	Pat Summitt	University of Tennessee
4	Keitha Adams	University of Texas at El Paso
5	Debbie Patterson	Kansas State University
6	Lisa Bluder	University of Iowa
7	Elaine Elliott	University of Utah
8	Joanne Boyle	University of California, Berkeley

Auriemma and the national winners from the other five divisions will be honored at the RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA National Coach of the Year Luncheon presented by AstraZeneca on Monday, April 7, 2008, at Noon (ET) in the Marriott Waterside's Grand Ballroom. The luncheon is part of the WBCA National Convention, held in conjunction with the NCAA® Women's Final Four® in Tampa Bay, Fla.

#### About RUSSELL ATHLETIC

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