



PRESS RELEASE

## WBCA Supports NCAA's Commitment to Strengthen Enforcement of Bench Decorum

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. (October 11, 2007) -- Stakeholder groups involved with National Collegiate Athletic Association basketball are making a unified commitment to substantial improvement in the enforcement of appropriate bench decorum for coaches and student-athletes throughout the 2007-08 season. The NCAA initiative is endorsed by the Collegiate Commissioners Association (CCA), the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) and the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA).

The initiative is consistent with the Association's broader strategic goal of assuring that student-athletes compete with the highest level of integrity and sportsmanship.

Head coaches and other bench personnel who engage in unsportsmanlike actions, in or out of the coaching box, will be in violation of bench decorum rules and will be assessed a direct technical foul without being issued a warning. Unsportsmanlike actions include but, are not limited to disrespectfully addressing an official; attempting to influence an official's decision; using profanity or language that is abusive, vulgar or obscene; taunting or baiting an opponent; objecting to an official's decision by rising from the bench or excessively using gestures that either demonstrate officiating signals or displeasure with officiating; inciting undesirable crowd reactions; and entering the playing court unless done with permission of an official to attend to an injured player. In addition to penalties for coaches, student-athletes and other bench personnel, game officials who consistently enforce the rules for bench decorum throughout the season will enhance their position for conference and/or NCAA championship selection and assignments.

"This is something that coaches always ask for and that's to have game officials enforce the rules that are already in place," said Jim Boeheim, head men's basketball coach at Syracuse University and president of the NABC. "The bench decorum rules, which include staying in the prescribed coaching box, have been interpreted in various ways for some time. This initiative for strengthened, consistent enforcement has significant ramifications. Coaches and game officials who do not strictly adhere to the rules will be penalized."

By rule, a coach may legally leave the coaching box during play only to prevent a fight from escalating, to point out a scoring or timing mistake, to request a timeout to ascertain whether a correctable error needs to be rectified, or to seek information from the official scorer or timer during a timeout or an intermission. However, if a head coach is found to be clearly and completely outside the coaching box appropriately communicating with officials, coaching his or her team, or engaged in

miscellaneous legal actively or minor conduct infractions, a single warning shall be issued. Subsequent infractions will result in a direct technical foul. Head coaches are responsible for the conduct and behavior of all bench personnel.

"As coaches, we are fully accountable for our actions," said Sherri Coale, head women's basketball coach at the University of Oklahoma and president of the WBCA. "With strengthened enforcement, coaches will be more conscious of their demeanor knowing that a penalty will result from nappropriate behavior. We applaud the CCA for affirming this initiative and assuring a positive image for our sport."

The CCA unanimously endorsed the policy at its recent fall meeting in Chicago.

"There is nothing more important in our game right now than improving sportsmanship," said Rich Ensor, president of the CCA and commissioner of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference. "The commissioners recognize the importance of reinforcing the stance on appropriate bench decorum by our coaches and student-athletes. Providing an increased level of integrity and sportsmanship greatly improves the quality of the game for everyone."