



PRESS RELEASE

WBCA announces finalists for the 2012 RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA NAIA Coach of the Year Award

ATLANTA (March 15, 2012) – Brian Orr of Lewis–Clark State College (Lewiston, Idaho), Drew Olson of Concordia University (Seward, Neb.), Steve Brooks of Indiana Wesleyan University (Indianapolis), Dale Neal of Freed–Hardeman University (Henderson, Tenn.) and Marty Rowe of Lee University (Cleveland, Tenn.) are the 2012 RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA NAIA Regional Coaches of the Year, the Women's Basketball Coaches Association office announced today.

The five regional honorees – Orr (region 1), Olson (region 2), Brooks (region 4), Neal (region 5) and Rowe (region 5) – are finalists for the 2012 RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA NAIA National Coach of the Year award. The winner will be announced during the second annual WBCA Awards Show on Monday, April 2, in Denver. This event is part of the WBCA National Convention and is held in conjunction with the NCAA® Women's Final Four®.

"The WBCA would like to congratulate these five coaches on being named finalists for this year's NAIA Coach of the Year award," said WBCA CEO Beth Bass. "Each coach was selected by their peers and is deserving of this honor for their terrific seasons. On behalf of the WBCA and its members, I wish all five of these finalists the best of luck at the WBCA Awards Show in Denver."

"Russell Athletic believes in the 'Power of Team' and no team can be successful without a powerful leader," said Executive Vice President Gary Barfield. "Russell Athletic is pleased to honor the coaches nominated for Coach of the Year and applaud their successes."

Orr is in his 11th year leading 12th–ranked Lewis–Clark State College. The 28–4 Warriors earned a Frontier Conference title and a No. 3 seed in the NAIA Division I National Tournament.

Olson is in his sixth year as head coach at Concordia. Under Olson's direction, the team has seen four NAIA national championship berths in the past five seasons. The 2012 Great Plains Athletic Conference Coach of the Year honoree has led his team to a 32–2 record, including a GPAC title and a No. 1 seed in the NAIA Division II National Tournament.

Brooks, a veteran head coach at Indiana Wesleyan, led the Wildcats to a second straight Mid–Central College conference championship and No.1 ranking in NAIA Division II. Brooks served at the team's rock, as it has overcome unfortunate circumstances during the 2011–12 season to enter the NAIA Division II National

Tournament as the No. 1 seed. In his 13th season as head coach, Brooks' team is 32–2.

Neal is in his 18th season as the head at No. 3 NAIA Division I Freed–Hardeman, and has guided it to 28–5 overall and 14–2 TranSouth Conference records. Neal's team earned a No. 1 seed in the NAIA DI National Tournament after finishing runner–up in the TranSouth Conference championships. Under Neal's direction, the Lady Lions have posted 20–win seasons and earned NAIA National Tournament berths each season.

Rowe, a sixth–year head coach at Lee University, continued his impressive 12–year streak of 20–win seasons and NAIA National Tournament berths. The Lady Flames are ranked No. 7 in NAIA Division I and landed a two seed in the national championships with a 30–3 record and runner–up finish in the Southern States Athletic Conference Championship.

RUSSELL ATHLETIC and the WBCA present the national coach of the year award annually in each of the five WBCA membership divisions (NCAA Divisions I, II and III; NAIA; junior/community college and high school). This marks the 28th year the award has been presented, which has been selected by the WBCA since 1985.

About RUSSELL ATHLETIC:

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About the WBCA:

Founded in 1981, the Women's Basketball Coaches Association promotes women's basketball by unifying coaches at all levels to develop a reputable identity for the sport and to foster and promote the development of the game as a sport for women and girls. The WBCA is pleased to join the women's sports community in commemorating the 40th anniversary of Title IX, which was passed by Congress on June 23, 1972, and provides females with equal opportunities in athletics in the U.S. For more information on the WBCA, please visit wbca.org.