



PRESS RELEASE

WBCA Announces Finalists for the 2012 RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA DII National Coach of the Year Award

ATLANTA (March 19, 2012) – Meghan Burke Brown of Southern Connecticut State University (New Haven, Conn.), Stan Swank of Edinboro University (Edinboro, Pa.), Dennis Cox of Clayton State University (Morrow, Ga.), Sue Ramsey of Ashland University (Ashland, Ohio), Kiley Hill of Valdosta State University (Valdosta, Ga.), Lane Lord of Pittsburg State University (Pittsburg, Kan.), Chris Kielsmeier of Wayne State College (Wayne, Neb.) and Charity Elliott of University of California–San Diego are the 2012 RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA Division II Regional Coaches of the Year, the Women's Basketball Coaches Association announced today.

The regional honorees – Burke Brown (region 1), Swank (region 2), Cox (region 3), Ramsey (region 4) Hill (region 5), Lord (region 6), Kielsmeier (region 7) and Elliott (region 8) – are finalists for the 2012 RUSSELL ATHLETIC/WBCA NCAA Division II 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 congratulates these coaches on being named finalists for this year's Division II 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 eight 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 RUSSELL ATHLETIC Executive Vice President Gary Barfield. "Russell Athletic is pleased to honor the coaches nominated for National Coach of the Year and applaud their successes."

Burke Brown is in her fifth year as head coach at Southern Connecticut State. Brown's Falcons finished runner-up in the Northeast-10 Conference championship game and earned a No. 2 seed in the East Region of the NCAA Division II National Tournament. Her team advanced to the regional semifinal and ended the season with a 25–6 record.

Swank guided No. 1 Edinboro to a second consecutive Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference title. The back-to-back wins marks the first time in program history the feat was accomplished. A second record was set the same night for victories in a single season (27), but Swank's Fighting Scots didn't quit there, ending the season with a 30–2 record. The 25 year veteran head coach took his team to the NCAA

Division II Atlantic Regional Final for the first time in 15 years.

Cox, in his eighth season as head coach of the Clayton State Lakers, led his team to a Peach Belt Conference regular season championship. The Peach Belt Conference Coach of the Year and his team finished runner-up in the conference tournament and earned a No. 2 seed in the NCAA Division South Regional. Cox's team finished the season with a 29-4 record.

Ramsey's Ashland Eagles won the GLIAC championship, becoming the first basketball team in school history to reach the achievement. The 2012 WBCA Carol Eckman Award winner and GLIAC Coach of the year recipient led her team to a perfect regular season record and now awaits an NCAA Division II Elite Eight matchup with a 31-1 record. The 17-year head coach and her team boast a 30-game winning streak – the longest of any athletic program in Ashland Athletics' history.

Hill is in his 12th season at Valdosta State. Under his direction, the Lady Blazers (22-8) earned an at-large bid to the national tournament as a six-seed in the South Regional. Hill's squad capped its postseason run with a trip to the NCAA Division II Sweet Sixteen.

Lord's Gorilla Women of Pittsburg State (27-5) made school history after winning a NCAA Division II first-round game Mar. 9, and continue to write history books as they advance in the tournament. The fourth-year head coach and MIAA Conference Coach of the Year helped his team earn a trip to the Elite Eight after notching a South Central Regional Final victory.

Kielsmeier is taking his Wayne State Wildcats to the NCAA Division II Elite Eight after posting a victory in the Central Region title game. The 32-2 Wildcats collected their 46th straight home-victory to punch their ticket to the Elite Eight. Under Kielsmeier's direction, the team earned a Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference Championship and placed three on the conference's all-tournament team. In his fourth year as head coach, Kielsmeier also earned NSIC Coach of the Year honors.

Elliott was named the California Collegiate Athletic Association Coach of the Year by a unanimous vote of his conference coaching peers. In her fifth year at the helm at California-San Diego, Elliott guided her team to a 26-0 record – the best start in conference and program history. Elliot's Tritons nabbed a conference title and advanced to the NCAA Division II West Regional Championship game before ending the season 30-3.

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 is the 30th year of this honor, which has been selected by the WBCA since 1983.

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.