



PRESS RELEASE

## Four programs selected finalists for RUSSELL ATHLETIC Together We R Team Award

ATLANTA (March 11, 2013) – Cal State Fullerton, Ocean County College, Purdue University and the University of Oklahoma women's basketball programs are finalists for the second annual RUSSELL ATHLETIC "Together We R" Team Award, the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) announced today.

In its second year, the "Together We R" Team Award honors programs that have strived to succeed in the face of adversity, overcoming extraordinary circumstances such as an unforeseen team crisis, barrier or unfortunate situation that caused extra stress. The team must exemplify strong commitment to core values of togetherness, courage, unparalleled work ethic and heart, and must personify the "Together We R" belief that teams are stronger than individuals.

The finalists – selected by a committee of WBCA past presidents – have each submitted a video telling their story. The videos are posted on the WBCA's YouTube channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/WBCABasketball>

Starting today, WBCA members and fans alike can vote by "liking" the video for the team they think is most deserving of the award. The fans' choice, determined by the video receiving the most "likes," will receive one additional vote when the selection committee chooses the winner. Voting ends at 5 p.m. ET Friday, March 15.

### Cal State Fullerton

Cal State Fullerton unexpectedly lost its assistant coach, Monica Quan, who was murdered along with her boyfriend just over a month ago. The team slogan since the event has been, "The courage to continue that counts." The Titans had one of their biggest wins of the season just a couple weeks after Quan's tragic death -- defeating conference rival UC Santa Barbara for the first time in 18 years. Cal State Fullerton completed the regular season with a 9–21 record.

*"I can't begin to tell you what it's been like to lead a normal life right now as a basketball family," said Marcia Foster, head coach of the Titans. "Everyone knows how important it is for all of us to be together and be on the same page. We do so much as a unit and the loss of Monica has shaken all of us to the core."*

### Ocean County College

Hurricane Sandy, the devastating storm that hit in late October, shut down Ocean County College's campus for two weeks. Head coach Dana Kovich lived in the Barrier Islands where there was utter devastation and lost her home. The start of the season was pushed back to allow the team ample time to regroup, and the coaches and players participated in numerous community service projects. When the season began, the Vikings started out with three wins and seven losses, but then came together and went on to win the 2013 NJCAA Division III Region XIX Women's Basketball Championship.

*"We knew the storm was coming. We live on the ocean block and we knew on Sunday night that we would be under water," said Kovich. "The first phone call was to the players to make sure they were okay and it was almost as important to do as worrying about the money."*

#### Purdue University

Terry Kix, director of basketball operations, found out prior to the start of the season that she had stage-3 stomach cancer and has been battling the disease during the season. Although she has been fighting for her life she has played an inspirational role in helping the team succeed on and off the court. The third-seeded Boilermakers (24-8) won the Big Ten Tournament championship.

*"Having our team who are very strong Christians and when you are facing something like this you have to go to a deep level and you study your faith," said Kix. "I have always been so happy to support the survivors that have come out but this time I am looking at them as my inspiration and I am looking at them as if they can do it I can do it."*

#### University of Oklahoma

Assistant coach Jan Ross found out in April that she had breast cancer. During her time fighting against the disease she hardly missed any work and tried to maintain as normal a life as possible. Head coach Sherri Coale, who had submitted the winning bid on a pink ladder that was auctioned off by the Kay Yow Cancer Fund last April, asked each player to write a six-word saying on the ladder that summarized the player's journey as an athlete. The players also put on the ladder, "Playing for our rock Coach Ross." Oklahoma (22-10) lost in the Big 12 Conference Tournament semifinals.

*"It's been one of the most touching things of my life. We have been so busy and trying to figure things out and where do we go next and what do we do. Out of the blue I had just remembered and needed to get away to see what they had written. I had no idea they were going to do something like this and it was very special," said Ross.*

"These teams have had to go through difficulties that would set back any team, but they overcame them by banding together in an impressive manner that we hope any team would if they experienced these circumstances," said WBCA CEO Beth Bass. "Each of these teams deserve to be recognized for their determination to continue on with their season. The scenario that each team had to face is tough, but fighting through the situation as a team made it much easier."

"Russell Athletic is proud to be able to recognize teams that have overcome

tremendous adversity again this year," said Senior Vice President Gary Barfield. "Despite facing tough circumstances, these teams have worked together to be successful on the court. This is the true spirit of 'Together We R.' We are pleased to be able to recognize their triumphs over adversity with the Russell Athletic Together We R team award."

The recipient of the "Together We R" Team Award will be announced and formally recognized during the third annual WBCA Awards Show, which will be held at 5 p.m. CT Monday, April 8, at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center's New Orleans Theater. This event is part of the WBCA National Convention and is held in conjunction with the NCAA® Women's Final Four®.

#### About RUSSELL:

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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. For more information on the WBCA, please visit [wbca.org](http://wbca.org).