



PRESS RELEASE

WBCA board establishes working groups to explore changes in women's basketball

EDITOR'S NOTE: Updated Aug. 2 to include all board member in assignments to working groups.

ATLANTA (August 1, 2013) – The future of women's basketball and the role the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) will play in helping to shape it was at the forefront of discussions during the summer meeting of the WBCA Board of Directors held Tuesday at the Atlanta Airport Marriott Gateway hotel .

The discussions were prompted by the release of the Division I Women's Basketball White Paper prepared by former WNBA President and newly appointed Big East Conference Commissioner Val Ackerman and released in June by the NCAA. The paper suggests that significant changes need to be made to women's basketball in order for the sport to continue to gain momentum.

"Val's white paper presents a stark assessment of the current state of women's basketball," said WBCA President Sue Semrau, head coach at Florida State University. "While the game remains near the height of its popularity, attendance and TV ratings are at a plateau."

"We have an opportunity right now to reimagine our sport. What must our sport become if it is to appeal to future generations of athletes and fans? How do we get from here to there? I believe the WBCA is uniquely positioned to help lead the search for those answers."

Semrau assigned board members to three working groups, each co-chaired by two members of the association's Executive Committee, to focus on a particular topic and develop recommendations for consideration by the entire board. Each group met briefly to begin their discussions and will continue them by teleconference in the coming weeks. The groups are:

- Legislation and Governance -- Penn State head coach Coquese Washington, the association's vice president, and Notre Dame head coach Muffet McGraw co-chair this group, which will focus on how the WBCA might be better represented in a revised NCAA governance structure, how the WBCA can more effectively participate in the NCAA legislative process, and how the WBCA's own governance structure might be improved in order to have a more efficient organization. Members include Claudette Charney, Hillsdale College; Diane Dickman, NCAA; Kelly Graves, Gonzaga; Danielle O'Banion, Kent State; Martha Putallaz, faculty athletic representatives; Jennifer

Rizzotti, Hartford; Christy Thomaskutty, Emory; and Rich Ensor, Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference.

- Playing Rules and Officiating -- Kentucky head coach Matthew Mitchell, the association's secretary, Connecticut head coach Geno Auriemma, and West Coast Conference deputy commissioner Connie Hurlbut co-chair this group, which will focus on whether or not we have the right rules going forward and how the game is officiated. The goal is to improve the quality of the game so that it is more attractive to spectators. Members include Anucha Browne, NCAA; Nikki Caldwell, LSU; Carmen Dolfo, Western Washington; Brandan Harrell, Georgia Highlands College; Patricia Manning, Williams College; Joanne McCallie, Duke; Melissa McFerrin, Memphis; Vic Schaefer, Mississippi State; and Dawn Staley, South Carolina.

- Professional and Grass Roots Development -- Kansas State head coach Deb Patterson, the association's treasurer, and Arizona State head coach Charli Turner Thorne, the immediate past president, co-chair this group, which will focus on educational programming that will provide WBCA members with opportunities to become better coaches as well as explore the feasibility of establishing a certification service for coaches of women's basketball. Members include Amanda Butler, Florida; Tricia Cullop, Toledo; Aaron Johnston, South Dakota State; Mary Klinger, Rutgers Prep; Lisa Misphey Fortier, Gonzaga; Kirsten Moore, Westmont College; Mary Beth Spirk, Moravian College; Carol Callan, USA Basketball; and Todd Starkey, Lenoir-Rhyne.

"As I sat in that board room and looked around the table at my colleagues, I saw some of the best and brightest minds in the sport -- successful coaches and administrators from almost every level of competition, people who have been selected and entrusted by their peers to represent them," said Semrau. "The collective wisdom and experience of our diverse membership, as represented by our board of directors, is an invaluable resource as we determine our next steps in this process."

In other business, the board of directors:

- Entertained Rosalyn Durant, ESPN vice president of college sports programming, and Lindsey Ross, ESPN associate manager, programming & acquisitions who reported on the expanded coverage of women's basketball on ESPN's family of networks and their preliminary plans for coverage in the upcoming 2013-14 season.

- Gave WBCA alumni members the opportunity to submit nominations for the Jostens-Berenson Lifetime Achievement Award.

- Directed staff to proceed with drafting a comprehensive revision to the association's bylaws to be presented to the board for review at its April 2014 meeting in Nashville.

- Submitted to the membership for a vote three proposals to amend the bylaws that, if adopted, will streamline the revision process.

- o Proposal 2013-01 changes the vote needed to amend the bylaws from a two-thirds majority to a simple majority of the votes cast

- o Proposal 2013-02 authorizes the board to make technical amendments to the bylaws, which affect only spelling, grammar, punctuation, organization and

consistency, and do not alter their meaning.

o Proposal 2013–03 authorizes the board to make substantive amendments to the bylaws if the board unanimously deems them to be non–controversial, meaning that they are not adverse to and would be widely accepted by the membership. The proposal also provides the membership with a means of overriding the board's adoption of a non–controversial amendment.

- Accepted the independent audit of the association's finances from the 2012–13 fiscal year.

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.