



PRESS RELEASE

## WBCA Board of Directors focuses on branding, certification, high school membership during summer meeting

ATLANTA (August 4, 2015) -- Branding, certification of coaches and increasing high school membership were three areas of focus for the Women's Basketball Coaches Association Board of Directors during its annual summer meeting on July 30, the WBCA office announced today.

Penn State University head coach Coquese Washington, presiding over her first board meeting as the WBCA's new president, also assigned board members to existing working groups to continue the work of the association in the areas of branding & membership, legislation & governance, playing rules & officiating, professional development and youth basketball. Washington also created a sixth new working group to concentrate on the area of recruiting.

The board heard a presentation by Global Prairie, a digital marketing and advertising agency hired earlier this year by the WBCA to conduct a brand awareness study of members and nonmembers alike, and approved moving forward with rebranding the association based on the company's findings. The rebranding will include a seismic shift in how the WBCA perceives and serves its members; a completely redesigned website built specifically to provide more and better content that members want and need; and tweaks to the WBCA's logo and colors.

"The WBCA has wrestled with the question of how to serve a membership that spans every level of the sport," said WBCA Executive Director Danielle M. Donehew. "Global Prairie's research, however, reveals that our members, regardless of the level on which they coach, are not as different as we thought.

"By altering how we perceive our members, when we look at them from the aspect of least to most experienced rather than scholastic to NCAA Division I, we realize that they all follow the same coaching journey. For example, young coaches – no matter the level at which they coach – share the same mindset, attitudes and goals and feel the same frictions. Most importantly, for the WBCA, these young coaches have the same needs. The same holds true for experienced coaches as well as seasoned veterans.

"This makes our challenge of understanding and meeting those needs more realistic and manageable."

The board's Professional Development Working Group heard a presentation on a proposed format for a coaching certification program. The board approved moving

forward with developing the proposed format but said it would require a business plan that details the costs involved in launching and sustaining the program before authorizing its implementation.

“Since 1981, year one in WBCA terms, the board has talked about the need of a certification program for coaches in our sport,” said Donehew. “We are finally on the cusp of making it a reality. It, however, will be a significant financial investment for the association, one that may not be recouped for years, if ever. The board simply wants all the data necessary for it to make a responsible, well-informed decision before committing to it.”

The board of directors, however, did not hesitate in approving a plan that, hopefully, will attract new high school coaches to the WBCA fold.

High school coaches who are members of the National High School Basketball Coaches Association (NHSBCA) will be able to join the WBCA for \$40 per year, more than half off the \$85 rate normally charged high school members provided they do so by Dec. 15. The WBCA will also develop a new e-newsletter tailored specifically for high school coaches. The e-newsletter will launch in December and be distributed every other month thereafter. The NHSBCA will encourage its members to join the WBCA and will assist WBCA staff with programming for high school coaches during the WBCA Convention.

“The WBCA is committed to increasing and serving high school members,” said Donehew. “The success of our sport on all levels is predicated on the success of our sport at the youth level. High school coaches, including middle school and junior varsity coaches, play crucial roles in developing young players and teaching them the skills and values necessary for them to be successful at the next level. By investing in high school coaches we are investing in the future of our sport.”

In other action, the Board of Directors:

- Approved a \$2.61 million operating budget for the 2015–16 fiscal year.
- Appointed NCAA Division III board member Christy Thomaskutty, head coach at Emory University, to the WBCA Executive Committee.
- Authorized the incoming President every two years to appoint ad-hoc nonvoting board members (e.g., NCAA, USA Basketball, etc.) whose terms of service will coincide with the term of the President who appoints them.
- Determined that any WBCA member coach who serves on the NCAA Division I Women’s Basketball Oversight Committee (currently University of South Carolina head coach Dawn Staley) will automatically serve as an ad-hoc nonvoting member of the WBCA board.
- Voted to develop a policy governing the attendance of voting board members at board meetings.
- Approved in concept the creation of an Assistant Coach of the Year awards platform and a “Thirty Under 30” program to recognize young “up-and-coming” coaches in the

sport and authorized the Legislation & Governance Working Group and Assistant Coaches Committee to develop and implement both programs.

- Directed the Legislation & Governance Working Group to extensively review the existing WBCA Awards program and report its findings to the board not later than Summer 2016.
- Signed on to a legal brief supporting the University of Texas in its defense of affirmative action policies that are being challenged before the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Authorized the NCAA Division II board members to review the NCAA Division II Top 25 Coaches Poll system and make any changes they believe will improve the accuracy, credibility and integrity of the poll.
- Supported extending the NCAA National Letter of Intent spring signing period for women's basketball so that it mirrors the spring signing period proposed by men's basketball as part of its new rules for players entering the NBA Draft.
- Sent to the membership two substantive bylaw proposals. The first proposal would add one NCAA Division I board member to the Executive Committee. The second proposal would reinstate provisions governing amendments that were overwhelmingly approved by the membership in 2013 but that were inadvertently omitted from the comprehensive revision that was approved by the membership earlier this summer.
- Adopted four bylaw amendments clarifying existing provisions that it unanimously deemed noncontroversial, contingent upon the membership reinstating its authority to do so.
- Approved a reduction in annual dues from \$220 to \$130 for international coaches since digital communications now allow the association to serve international members more efficiently and economically.

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