



To: NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Coaches

From: Beth Bass, Chief Executive Officer

Date: December 6, 2004

Re: WBCA Recruiting and Access Proposals

I hope this finds you well and off to a great start for the 2004-2005 basketball season. It is difficult to believe that we are close to four months into the school year and over six weeks into the basketball season. Off the court, we have been busy as well with the WBCA's recruiting and access package that is progressing through the current NCAA legislative cycle. The NCAA Division I Management Council is slated to review and to initially vote on the package at its January meeting during the NCAA Convention. By now, you have had numerous occasions to review each proposal in the package and have had serious, in-depth discussions with your colleagues. Throughout this entire process, open communication has been key to the success we have achieved so far. We hope this healthy dialogue will continue over the course of the next month.

We are fully aware that Bill McDonough of BlueChip Basketball has contacted many of you regarding the WBCA's recruiting and access package, more specifically about Proposal Nos. 2004-142 and No. 2004-146. The WBCA has had numerous conversations with him as well, and I personally encouraged him to contact each of you. I strongly urge you to take a moment now to keep in mind what the WBCA Special Committee on Recruiting and Access is trying to achieve with these two proposals. In the charge given to the Special Committee by NCAA President Myles Brand, he asked us to not just tweak the current system, but to make significant and constructive recommendations to improve the current landscape in women's basketball. With this charge, the Special Committee adopted the following as two of its guiding principles that lay the foundation upon which these two proposals rests:

- To promote equity among member institutions in their recruitment of prospective student-athletes and shield them from undue pressures that may interfere with the scholastic and athletics interests of the prospects or their educational institutions. (NCAA Constitution 2.11)
- Outside influences that place undue pressure on and negatively impact the development of the prospective women's basketball student-athlete should be reduced.

The intent of both proposals addresses these growing concerns and recommends equity and a new look to the recruiting process. Our primary

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concern with the use of a Division I institution's facilities is the significant recruiting advantages gained by hosting events. As for nonscholastic events, placing focus back on the scholastic environment and the scholastic coach during the academic year will result in more scholastic events to fill the void. The recent proliferation of nonscholastic events during the academic year where event organizers, nonscholastic coaches, apparel and equipment companies, and others outside the educational community attempt to showcase a prospect's talent for personal gain creates an unhealthy, competitive environment in women's basketball. This does not mean that all non-institutional events are negative or that all event organizers are in it for personal gain; however, as the sport of women's basketball continues to grow, so has the influence and the activity of nonscholastic coaches. This has served to minimize the importance of the scholastic environment during the academic year and the role of the scholastic coaches and high school principals in the recruiting process. Many of the nonscholastic entities operate in a structure devoid of any accountability and their influence has corrupted the recruiting process; provided unfair recruiting advantages to select institutions, and lends more control to independent entities profiting from our sport. This is an issue we can no longer ignore.

We understand the realm of intercollegiate athletics is very competitive with its primary focus on winning; however, the playing field is not equal to allow all coaches and their teams the equal opportunity to succeed. Action must be taken to curb the influence of nonscholastic entities and to level the playing field. We must strive to maintain the pureness of the game throughout the entire recruiting process. The health and the future of women's basketball depends upon your choice to do what is right and what is best for the game. Each and every coach must put aside their divisions and assume personal responsibility – not only for your own teams and for your own student-athletes, but also for the sport and for those that will follow.

When the WBCA's recruiting and access package is considered as a whole, it represents a blueprint for change and a vision of what you as the stakeholder would like the sport of women's basketball to become. The package, in its entirety, also represents a positive shift in the recruiting culture in women's basketball. Over time, old ways of thinking will fade and will be replaced by a new culture that promotes purity and competitive equity in the recruiting process. We have made some progress, but there remains much to do to successfully realize this cultural change. We can begin with your support of this package and its proposals. We urge you to recognize that the package as a whole is more important than any one or two proposals individually.

The WBCA urges you to support the recruiting and access package. We strongly believe this comprehensive plan is in the best collective interest of the prospective student-athlete, the student-athlete, the collegiate coach and the sport of women's basketball. As the Special Committee did, we ask that you, too, take off your institutional hats and put aside your individual desires.

We realize that there will be bumps along the way, but our persistence to stay on course will allow us to prevail against the challenges that arise.

I leave you with one last closing thought. On a recent trip to Indianapolis, I had the pleasure to visit and to catch up with Jim Haney, my counterpart at the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC). I asked Jim if there were any issues that he would have had the foresight to change in men's basketball 20 years ago, what would they be. Without hesitation, he said, "To recognize the impact of outside influences on the student-athlete and the prospective student-athlete throughout the entire recruiting process – from grassroots to the NBA." Women's basketball has been fortunate to learn from the experiences and to avoid some of the pitfalls the men have had in their own sport, and we realize that men's and women's basketball do have some different issues. But, I ask you to keep in mind the overriding goal we both share – our common commitment to improve the sport of basketball.

Thank you for your time and attention and we look forward to moving forward for the betterment of women's basketball – together.

cc: NCAA Division I Commissioners
NCAA Division I Directors of Athletics
NCAA Division I Senior Woman Administrators
Selected NCAA Staff Members
WBCA Special Committee on Recruiting and Access