



VOLUME 43, NO. 2

January, 2006

Big O's a big plus in strengthening player of year award

The members USBWA have a great deal for which we can be thankful as we head into the New Year. We get to watch, write about, and be a part of game that we all love. And we are actually able to make a living doing it.

We in the USBWA should be especially thankful that we have a very good relationship with the great Oscar Robertson, for whom our player of the year award is named.

Unfortunately, that is not the case for Wooden Award. In fact, it appears that due to a series of conflicts between the family of coach John Wooden and the Los Angeles Athletic Club, the UCLA legend will not be present at this year's banquet on April 8.

According to a story written by Bill Dwyer in the *Los Angeles Times*, there is an ongoing battle between the Hathaway family that runs the LAAC and believes they have exclusive rights to use Wooden's name when it comes to awards. They say that coach Wooden gave them those rights 30 years ago. The Wooden family, with Wooden's backing, disagrees on the exclusivity of that agreement.

As Bill wrote, there will be no winners in this conflict.

But it points out how fortunate we are in the USBWA. Oscar Robertson and those representing him to continue to work with Joe Mitch, our executive director, in an effort to give our Player of the Year Award an even greater profile.

And that is how it should be. It is the only national player of the year award that is named after a player. That player, it should be noted, has been honored as the college player of the century. Our goal, as it has been for some time

now, is to make the Oscar Robertson Award the pre-eminent player of the year award.

NCAA UPDATE: As you all know, Bill Hancock has stepped down from his post as the media coordinator of the NCAA's Tournament to join the BCS. Obviously, the USBWA has a keen interest in his replacement.

We have had several discussions with Bill and members of the men's basketball committee to let them know that the USBWA is ready to help if needed. We, of course, would like to see someone in the Dave Cawood, Jim Marchiony, and Bill Hancock mold fill that position. In short, we would like to see someone who truly understands the needs and requirements of the print media and will work hard-and fight if necessary-to get those things done.

A replacement should be named after the first of the year. Based on those I know who are in the running, I

believe the USBWA will be pleased with the selection.

THE NEXT FIGHT: We have long assumed our next challenge is going to be keeping our seats on the floor at the Final Four. I have received indications there might be a more immediate conflict.

Corporate sponsors are putting more and more pressure on the NCAA for prime space in the arenas in order to entertain their clients. That space will have to come from somewhere, and in the domes there might be a move afoot to take it from the media work and interview area.

We will continue to monitor the situation and will bring it up when we meet with the men's basketball committee in Indianapolis. In the meantime, keep your ears open, and if you hear anything along these lines that I need to know, please contact me at tbarnhart@mindspring.com.

President

By **TONY BARNHART**
Atlanta Journal-Constitution



Get organized for 2006: Your PC will thank you

The basketball season has already started and you're still trying to wrap things up from football season and wondering how it can possibly be 2006. Now is a good time as any to get your computer and its files in order.

The first thing you should do is make sure you have the latest versions of some of the plug-ins you use on a regular basis: Adobe Reader, Real Player and Windows Media Player are surely among them. You can go to their respective websites or simply click on the help menu of each program and search for updates. While most files will load on older versions, the newer versions will make things faster and easier to load, read and listen to.

And, speaking of faster and easier, you should empty out your recycle bin and clean up your hard drive. Simply click on the start button, the hit "All Programs," then Accessories > System Tools > Disc Cleanup. Choose your hard drive and then cleanse it of all those temporary files.

Now get started on organizing your hard drive, in most cases, the C: drive. You will want to save most of your files under My Documents. Clean out everything you know you'll never need again and sort what you want to keep. Move files into sub-folders to make them easier to find.

Back up some of your most prized work to a CD or

some other memory device, in case of a hard-drive disaster.

You should repeat this process with e-mail. Clean out what you don't need. It slows down your server and e-mail program. Save any attachments you might want and valuable e-mails to folders you can create within Outlook or just about any other e-mail program. Then, start tossing stuff.

Look into your sent e-mail folder. Kill those e-mails you don't need.. Make sure they don't just sit in your deleted files folder. Empty that out, too.

The longer you wait, the harder it's going to be later on

to find and sort things. It's not going to cripple your machine, nor is it likely to fill up your hard drive, but why carry around a bunch of files you don't need? And why add to the mess that will slow you down when you really do need to find something in your personal archive?

If you are lucky enough to have a good IT department at the office, consult with them about how to maximize performance of your hard drive. Once you clean up the drive, you will be surprised at how much easier your life with your laptop will be.

Web Site Editor

By **TED GANGI**
HiTEX! Enterprises



Breakfast at Indy will be highlight of Final Four

For the second year in a row, the USBWA will honor its national college player and coach of the year at a breakfast during the NCAA Final Four.

This year's event will be held at Conseco Fieldhouse in downtown Indianapolis on Friday morning, March 31, the day before the national semifinals.

Last year, the USBWA initiated the player and coach breakfast at the Final Four in St. Louis and the event was a huge success, attracting a sellout crowd of over 500 people.

Officials at Conseco Fieldhouse have agreed to host this year's breakfast in the atrium leading into the arena. The area is spacious with seating in excess of 600. Events similar to the USBWA breakfast have been held in the Conseco atrium in the past.

Coordinating the breakfast in Indianapolis is former USBWA president Bill Benner, now working for the Indianapolis Convention and Visitors Association.

In addition to presenting the player and coach of the year awards, the USBWA also plans to honor the 1981 and 1976 Indiana Hoosiers on the 25th and 30th anniversaries,

respectively, of each team's national championship. The 1976 Hoosiers were also the last NCAA Division I team to go undefeated, finishing the season with a 32-0 record.

Honoring the two Indiana teams continues a tradition of recognizing individuals for their accomplishments that was started last season.

Last year, the USBWA honored three retiring coaches at the breakfast – Lou Henson of New Mexico State, Tom Brennan of Vermont and Gene Keady of Purdue. The breakfast concluded with Bruce Weber of Illinois receiving the Henry Iba Coach of the Year Award and Andrew Bogut of Utah the Oscar Robertson Player of the Year Trophy.

Discussions also are underway with city officials about Indianapolis possibly serving as the permanent host for a USBWA player and coach of the year awards dinner.

Indianapolis makes a lot of sense, as it is the home of the NCAA and amateur sports, making for a captive audience each year for the USBWA awards presentation.

And it's where Oscar Robertson grew up and made a name for himself in high school basketball before going on to receive All-America and player of the year honors at Cincinnati and later an all-star career in the NBA.

Announcing the USBWA player of the year award each year in Indianapolis or any other city on a permanent basis would follow the pattern set by two other major player of the year awards – the Wooden and Naismith. Both hold similar dinners at permanent sites to present their awards each year – the Wooden in Los Angeles and the Naismith in Atlanta.

Both the Wooden and Naismith are held during the week after the Final Four, and the USBWA would have to find a date that week for its event in Indianapolis.

All doable, of course, but at this point nothing is finalized. The USBWA board of directors would make the final decision on whether or not to keep the award presentation as is or move it on a permanent basis to Indianapolis.

Executive Director

BY JOE MITCH
MVC



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USBWA Membership Application Form

If you have not yet renewed your membership to the U.S. Basketball Writers Association now is the time to act. For your \$40 membership fee you will receive:

- the most complete directory in college basketball
- all 12 issues of *Basketball Times*;
- Marriott Athletic VIP Card
- access to USBWA website (usbwa.com)
- voting for All-America team and player and coach of year
- eligibility for Best Writing Contest, with cash prizes

Send a check for \$40 and let the USBWA make your job of covering college basketball easier.

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Plenty of Courageous candidates to choose from

The definition of courageous is chilling: it's the ability to face and deal with danger or fear without flinching.

That's what Jeremie Davis and Wayne Williams did when the pair of University of New Orleans newcomers was stuck in their university dorm room as the flood waters in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina began to flow through the doors and windows.

The two junior college transfers stayed in their room for a few nights. Williams' girlfriend and infant son were with them as well. For three days, they stayed in the room, waiting to be rescued. When they were rescued, on consecutive days – the Williams group by air Davis by boat – they ended up on I-10. They spent three horrific days and nights on the highway, seeing death, hearing the cries and screams of fear and hunger.

When they got out on buses, one to Houston, the other to northern Louisiana, they wondered if they should ever return to the city, let alone to the team that had been relocated to Tyler, Texas. They decided to join the team and make a go of sticking it out with the Privateers. They were due to return to New Orleans with the rest of the team and coaches. But they won't ever be the same, as they harbor the emotions of that fateful week.

Williams and Davis deserve consideration for the USBWA Most Courageous Award, for persevering a natural disaster and still being able to return to college basketball.

They aren't alone in dealing with tragedy, or trying to overcome an illness and courageously surviving to return to the game.

John Akers, editor of *Basketball Times*, offered up one

Second Vice-President

By ANDY KATZ
ESPN



of the most courageous candidates in Tennessee Tech coach Mike Sutton in last month's issue. Sutton is battling a debilitating disease, trying to come back from Guillere-Barre syndrome that left him paralyzed for months. Sutton is still the head coach, even if it's in absentia at times.

I still remember Sutton sitting behind me in press row at the Kentucky-Michigan State Elite Eight game in Austin last March. He was watching the Wildcats after serving as an assistant to Tubby Smith. He was engaging, entertaining and enjoying life. It was only a few weeks later at the Portsmouth Invitational (Va.) that he became increasingly sick.

His story is still developing. He deals with courage on a daily basis, struggling to get back to his own normalcy.

There are plenty of others that deserve mention like Darren Cooper of Portland, who lost his father, an uncle and grandmother to cancer all within a short time. His mother was also diagnosed with breast cancer. That's a lot

to handle for any person, let alone a college player who continues to play for Portland.

Will Kimble at UTEP is playing after being diagnosed with a heart condition, something that kept him out of the 2002-03 season.

Virginia Tech's Allen Calloway is battling cancer. He's attempting to play this season. Through Dec. 10, Calloway had played in two games as the senior forward is trying to stave off the disease while also making a contribution to the Hokies.

Look, there is no single winner here. All of these people, and there are others out there, are courageous in what they have gone through or are still dealing with this season. Consider these people and any others that you want to suggest as we forge ahead into the next year. This is a cherished award for this organization. It has purpose and it is always our most treasured honor to bestow at the Final Four.

Philly schools offer press-row model for rest of nation

When I read about and listen to press row issues around the country, I feel a bit guilty. In Philadelphia, the Big 5 schools make certain we all sit courtside.

It has been that way forever. There has never been any talk of changing it.

With writers being moved into corners and, in some places, football press boxes, I really feel guilty when I think of the press seating at the Palestra. If you've never covered a game at Penn's legendary gym, find a reason. There is simply nothing like it.

Press row is between the benches, one row off the floor. If you are lucky enough to sit near the end of the first row, you feel like you are in the huddle. If a coach is screaming at a player during a timeout, you know exactly what he is saying and why. If a coach is setting up a last-second play, you know what to look for because you know what is coming.

It is simply the closest any of us will ever come to being in the game. And it really helps you give your readers something unique.

Wandering coaches often carry on conversations with members of the press. Usually, it's about the officiating. Princeton's Pete Carril was the best. He knew everybody on press row. And they all knew him. Princeton's annual Palestra game with Penn always mattered, and Carril was on high alert for any questionable officiating. And when he saw something amiss, he would plead with us to make it right. We would just smile. He would not.

I was sitting there one Sunday when Temple coach John Chaney angrily picked up a chair during a timeout. His star guard Lynn Greer grabbed the old coach before he could make national news again. When he was asked about it after the game, Chaney said he didn't remember it. He

Third Vice-President

By DICK JERARDI
PHILADELPHIA DAILY



probably didn't.

When Drexel coaches Bruiser Flynt and Geoff Arnold, both Saint Joseph's graduates, thought their team was getting the worst of it from the refs during their game with St. Joe's last season, they demanded during the game that I write about it. I nodded politely. Drexel ended up winning, so I guess they were happy I wrote about that instead.

You are looking down so an official or coach never obscures your view. You hear what is said to the officials when they make the mistake of standing too close to overwrought coaches. You hear what the officials say under their breath to the coaches as they run up the court after the ball.

There is nothing off the record here, but you need to use discretion. If you've been around long enough, you know what can be used and what can't. I try to stay away from the cursing and look for the funny stuff.

I will never forget one night when a poor assistant coach lobbied his coach for a long time to get out of their man-to-man defense. The defense was being blitzed by penetration and was more or less useless. Within seconds of

the coach finally switching to zone, the other team banged in a wide-open three. With his team trailing by 20 and hopelessly overmatched, the coach blamed it all on his assistant who never spoke the rest of the game.

During the NCAA Tournament, some of the seats can be right behind the benches. I remember being in the Pontiac Silverdome for a 1988 Sweet 16 game between heavily favored Purdue and Kansas State. With Mitch Richmond, K-State was not only hanging in, it was about to pull off a big upset. During a timeout, Purdue's coaches kept screaming at each other: "What defense are they playing?" It took all of my professionalism not to scream, "Box-and-one, you buffoons."

At the Palestra, I have carried on conversations with coaches during games. Usually, it's an assistant coach, but sometimes a head coach will be looking for someone to commiserate with as a game is getting away.

No matter where you sit, the Palestra is simply the best place in America to watch a basketball game. And the absolute best seats are the ones all of us who cover the games are privileged to occupy.

A writer's guide to NCAA Final Four credentials

The NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Committee has reiterated its opposition to all forms of sports wagering, and encourages the media to assist in the education of the public with regard to the hazards of sports wagering.

Agencies shall direct requests for working media credentials for first/second rounds and regionals to the host media coordinator. Requests for the Final Four shall be directed to the NCAA national office. If space is limited at preliminary-round sites, preference will be given to applications received before March 1. The deadline for submitting 2005 Final Four applications will be February 18.

A "media agency" for purposes of these criteria shall mean a daily or weekly publication, cable system, radio station, television station or television network requiring immediate news coverage. "Immediate news coverage" for purposes of these criteria shall mean that the editorial, audio and/or visual deadline for the tournament action being documented occurs not later than 48 hours after the competition at the site has been completed.

Any agency that has been certified for a Final Four credential shall receive a first-/second-round and/or regional credential upon request.

Agencies that do not meet the criteria for circulation (for print media) or designated market area (for electronic media), but represent the geographic area of a participating institution, must staff each of the participant's previous tournament games in order to receive credentials to each subsequent game.

A press agency or television or radio station in the immediate geographic area and/or locale of a participating or host institution that has staffed its games on a regular basis throughout the season and does not otherwise meet the criteria may be designated by the participating or host institution as a "minority media enterprise." A "minority media enterprise" shall mean a business enterprise involved in the dissemination of sports news to individuals socially or economically disadvantaged from cultural, racial or chronic economic circumstances, or other similar cause. Such persons include, but are not limited to, African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Spanish-speaking Americans and American Indians. Such an agency may receive one media credential.

Except for television camera operators, a credential may be issued only to an authorized full-time, salaried representative of, or a representative who regularly and customarily performs services for, the agency submitting the request. Credentials are not transferable.

Membership in a writers' or broadcasters' association (e.g., United States Basketball Writers Association) does not automatically qualify an agency for credentials.

The provisions under "print," "television," "radio" and "online" herein do not apply to media agencies (e.g., student newspapers, television stations, radio stations and yearbooks) that are affiliated with a participating or host institution. Credentials may be issued to three individuals, certified by the director of athletics or designated representative of each participating and host institution, who will be the sole representatives of all such campus media organizations.

Subject to limitations of space, credentials at all sites shall be assigned in accordance with the following priorities:

Print

Separate publications sharing common ownership may not be combined for purposes of meeting circulation or other criteria.

1. A daily agency with circulation greater than 60,000, a weekly with circulation greater than 500,000 or a monthly with circulation greater than 750,000 will be identified as "national media" and will qualify for credentials. Press agencies may receive credentials according to the following circulation requirements:

Daily Circulation Credentials

60,000 - 99,999	one seat
100,000 - 249,999	one seat, one limited access
250,000 - 349,999	two seats, one limited access
350,000 - 449,999	three seats, one limited access
450,000 - 649,999	four seats, one limited access
650,000 - 999,999	five seats, two limited access
1 million and above	six seats, two limited access
Weekly Circulation Credentials	
500,000-3 million	two seats, two limited access
3 million and above	four seats, two limited access

Media teleconference schedule:

The NCAA has established the schedule for media teleconferences in connection with the 2006 Division I Men's Basketball Championship.

The schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, Feb. 22, 3 p.m. ET, Craig Littlepage;

Wednesday, March 8, 3 p.m. ET, Craig Littlepage;

Sunday, March 12, 7 p.m. ET, Craig Littlepage

Wednesday, March 29, 1 p.m. ET, Final Four coaches

The call-in number for all of the teleconferences is 913-981-5507. The first two are the chair's traditional pre-selection calls. The third is Selection Sunday.

Monthly Circulation Credentials

750,000-3 million	two seats, two limited access
3 million and above	four seats, two limited access

(Note: A limited-access credential only permits access to the media workroom, locker rooms and interview room.)

2. An agency that does not meet Criteria No. 1 qualifies for credentials if a full-time staff member has covered at least 90 percent of the participating institution's regular-season home games and each of its games in the NCAA championship. (Covering all of the institution's competition in a different NCAA championship fulfills the latter requirement.) Such an agency can receive one more than the number of credentials it used for a majority of the institution's home games.

3. A daily newspaper that is located in the market of a host institution but does not meet Criteria No. 1 qualifies for credentials it covers college basketball on a daily basis (i.e., full-time staff members cover games several nights each week.)

4. A weekly or monthly publication that covers college basketball exclusively and is distributed on a national basis — but does not meet Criteria No. 1 — qualifies for one credential if space is available.

5. The Associated Press and the primary newspaper(s) that provide daily coverage for the host institution each may receive a maximum of four tabled seats, four non-tabled seats and two limited-access credentials.

6. At the media coordinator's discretion, one credential may be issued to a reporter representing the "news side" of the major newspaper of the participating and/or host institution.

7. A print agency included on a team's local media list may receive additional credentials at a regional site not to exceed the total number of credentials it received covering first-/second-round competition at all sites.

Online

1. One credential may be issued to an online agency that (1) registers at least one million unique users per month in each of the 12 months before the tournament and (2)

covers college basketball daily.

2. One credential may be issued to an online agency that does not meet Criteria No. 1 if it covers (i.e., full-time staff members filed reports) at least 90 percent of the participating or host institution's home games.

3. The official Web site of a competing institution, as approved by that school's sports information department, may receive a maximum of two credentials in addition to the two credentials noted under Print, No. 8.

4. A print, radio or television agency will not receive more credentials than the number provided for elsewhere in this document. An agency may allot one (or more) of its credentials to its online entity.

5. An online entity may receive a credential only if its own full-time staff writes an overwhelming percentage of that site's material.

6. Online entities will not receive photography credentials.

7. Any online service that is recognized as an outlet intended primarily for the purpose of delivering news related to the recruitment of student-athletes will not qualify for credentials.

8. SportsTicker and Sports Reporting Network are eligible for one credential for a full-time staff member.

Agencies Not Eligible

1. Credentials will not be issued to persons solely for the purpose of writing or gathering material for books.

2. Credentials shall not be issued to representatives of syndicated television or cable programmers who are not producing programs for immediate news coverage (i.e., to air within 24 hours).

3. Credentials shall not be issued to representatives of professional basketball organizations, nor to telephone reporting services, nor to publications normally identified as "tout sheets," nor to other publications devoted solely to gambling.

4. Credentials shall not be issued to representatives of agencies that normally provide specific services for a media agency (e.g., scores) if many of its clients have been accredited to staff the event.

International Media Agencies

When space is available, credentials (writer and/or photographer) will be issued to a full-time, salaried employee, or a representative who regularly and customarily performs services, for:

1. A newspaper that has a minimum circulation of five percent of the total population of the country;

2. A specialty publication that has a minimum circulation of one percent of the total population of the country;

3. The official publication of the country's basketball federation;

4. A television station that has a signal reaching 25 percent of the homes in the country; or,

5. Each of the two largest television or radio sports networks in the country.

General

Each Bearer attending on of the events using a credential represents that such Bearer is acting on a specific assignment for a media agency. Bearer is an accredited agency's full-time salaried employee who has a legitimate working function in connection with the championship. The credential is not transferable and may be revoked without cause. The rights and privileges granted to Bearer shall automatically terminate if any term of this credential shall be breached. The unauthorized use of this credential subjects the Bearer to ejection from the facility and prosecution for criminal trespass.