

Another challenging year can still be fun, productive

When Kirk Wessler passed the pseudo gavel to me at our annual awards breakfast, I'll admit I thought about hitting myself on the head with it.

This is not an easy time to be USBWA president (which is my way of imploring you all to be kind, people). Our profession is changing in real time, as are the issues surrounding it. In some ways there are more of us than ever, with news outlets cropping up like daffodils in springtime. But this is nontraditional growth, not the birth of a new newspaper, and it brings with it even more challenges.

Who gets a credential? Which outlets are truly about news and which are more simply glorified fan sites and how should each be treated?

And of course, who sits where?

We're trying to address all of those issues.

First, the good news. Our task force in conjunction with the APSE has made quick and real progress in coming up with a method to tell SIDs who we at least deem credible news outlets worthy of credentialing.

Now for the reality – NCAA Tournament press seating. What can I say? It will never be what it was, so our goal now is to make it the best it can be.

From what I gathered at the Final Four, the elevated end zone seating wasn't ideal, but it wasn't awful, either.

Dana O'Neil
ESPN.com
President



So that's a start.

To me, the more important part is that the right people are in the right seats. An APSE liaison was assigned to each site this year to check the seating charts, but still there were mistakes. We don't want to get in the business of making seating charts, but we did ask David Worlock if we could see the layouts from every venue this year so we could see if there were some simple, common sense fixes that could be made.

On the positive side, the Indianapolis regional hosts made 50 more seats available courtside. They did not have tabletops to work on, but those folks would otherwise have been in the upper press box. The feedback I received was positive.

As for other issues – on Saturday at the Final Four,

we had a productive meeting with the selection committee. We aired our grievances about a shortage of rooms at the media hotel at two spots and the infrequency of the shuttle. We asked the NCAA to use whatever muscle it could – since these games fall under the NCAA umbrella – to require teams to offer local media time with the team before games.

We also asked that, during the course of an NCAA game, if CBS is given clarification on a controversial or reviewed officiating call that the same information be relayed to the reporters covering the game.

Both of those things seem doable.

Now for our role in all of this. I know firsthand how frustrating it is when things don't work – wireless, shuttles, whatever. But rather than take to social media to vent, please call or text someone to try to fix it. There are good people, believe it or not, on our side. Worlock and Dan Gavitt would be at the top of the list. Tell them personally or tell me or anyone else at the USBWA. We can't fix the problems if we don't know about them.

I know this won't be an easy year, but I hope we can make it a productive and maybe even a fun year.

Otherwise I'll just grab that gavel and swing.

Cheers,

Dana

Mary Jo Haverbeck Award joins women's lineup

NASHVILLE – The format instituted last season in moving the USBWA women's awards to the NCAA arena interview room several hours before the semifinals proved once again successful.

Some tweaking might still be in order in that most of the winners had games to be played and thus stand-ins on site accepted or pseudo presentations without the hardware were made on Saturday during the locker room sessions.

But one of the two highlights involved an award to join the lineup next season in Tampa.

The Mary Jo Haverbeck Award will be similar to the Katha Quinn Award on the men's side, with the same purpose – to be given to someone from the women's hoops world who gives service to USBWA or a sports media individual covering the women's game.

There was an intent to do this several years ago, when we began putting names on trophies beginning with the Ann Meyers-Drysdale player of the year and the Pat Summitt Most Courageous Award.

The plan was delayed as we tried to find a way to get Mary Jo, the longtime Penn State women's basket-

Mel Greenberg
Women's Representative



ball SID, to the finals so that we could surprise her. A longtime USBWA member, Mary Jo also worked with the NCAA's Rick Nixon's media liaison staff at the finals.

Unfortunately, Mary Jo came ill in late November and passed away at age 74 on Jan. 6, resulting in much homage paid to her pioneering and visionary work as one of the early women to work in sports information.

Special thanks to Jim O'Connell and Malcolm Moran, who spent much time with Mary Jo when he was at Penn State. The two, who founded the Katha Quinn honor, were on board with the concept.

At the Women's Final Four, the Women's Basketball Coaches Association's Mel Greenberg Media Award went to Mary Jo and was accepted by Penn State coach Coquese Washington. Previously, CoSIDA announced that Mary Jo's name will be on its Trailblazer Award.

In making the announcement of the new USBWA award, remarks were made by retired ESPN executive Rosa Gatti, a contemporary when Gatti was at Villanova as an SID, and Barb Kowal, CoSIDA's director of external affairs.

"What an amazing individual. She was a visionary," Gatti said. "She was a sports PR person, a journalist, a professor. She was such an advocate for women's basketball, women's sports and people. She leaves such a legacy. She holds the record for people mentored. It is fitting this award is named for her."

Kowal then spoke, saying, "We know Mary Jo is smiling down on us right now."

Connecticut athletic director Warde Manuel and senior associate athletic director Deb Corum accepted the Meyers-Drysdale award for Breanna Stewart. Notre Dame's Muffett McGraw repeated as coach of the year.

The United States Basketball Writers Association
803 Wildview Lane; Manchester, Mo. 63021
Visit us at: www.usbwa.com
314-795-6821; Fax: 314-444-4333

PRESIDENT – Dana O’Neil, espn.com;

C: 215-313-3425; dgoneil@msn.com

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT – Pat Forde, Yahoo!

Sports; H: 502-253-9761; C: 502-472-91633;

pfeaglebeak@aol.com

THIRD VICE PRESIDENT – Ed Graney, Las Vegas

Review-Journal; C: 702-524-3553;

egraney@reviewjournal.com

THIRD VICE PRESIDENT – Vahe Gregorian, Kansas

City Star, C: 816-799-6041; vgregorian@kcstar.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – Joe Mitch,

H: 636-227-9113; C: 314-795-6821;

mitch@usbwa.org

WEBMASTER – Ted Gangi, C: 214-909-9314;

ted.gangi@sportswriters.net

BOARD MEMBERS

DISTRICT I – Matt Vautour, Daily Hampshire Gazette,
mvaoutour@gazettenet.com

DISTRICT II – Nicole Auerbach, USA Today,

O: 703-854-5317; C: 908-672-2840;

nauerbach@usatoday.com

DISTRICT III – Laura Keeley, Raleigh News &

Observer; C: 724-816-7401;

lkeeley@newsobserver.com

DISTRICT IV – Kevin Brockway, Gainesville Sun;

O: 352-374-5054; C: 352-514-7189;

brockwk@gvillesun.com

DISTRICT V – Tom Noie, South Bend Tribune;

O: 574-235-6153; C: 574-229-1234; H: 574-272-6223;

tnoie@sbtinfo.com

DISTRICT VI – John Bohnenkamp, Burlington Hawk

Eye; O: 319-758-8133; H: 319-754-7523;

C: 319-759-8367; jbohenkamp@thehawkeye.com

DISTRICT VII – Randy Rosetta, New Orleans

Times-Picayune/NOLA.com; C: 225-505-0667;

randyrosetta67@gmail.com

DISTRICT VIII – Robert Gagliardi, Wyoming

Tribune Eagle; O: 307-633-3130; C: 307-421-1861;

rgagliardi@wyosports.net

DISTRICT IX – Bruce Pascoe, Arizona Daily Star;

O: 520-573-4147; H: 520-529-8483; C: 520-349-1159.

pascoe@azstarnet.com

WOMEN – Mel Greenberg; C: 215-815-5943;

poll@att.net

AT-LARGE – Eric Prisbell, USA Today;

C: 301-708-5022; espbell@aol.com

AT-LARGE – Chris Dortch, Blue Ribbon College

Basketball Yearbook; O: 423-468-3875;

C: 423-400-9488; cmdortch@comcast.net

SID – Brian Morrison, Atlantic Coast Conference;

O: 336-369-1002; H: 336-852-4975; C: 336-337-4896;

bmorrison@theacc.org

NEW MEDIA LIAISON – Chris DiSano; College

Chalktalk; C: 401-578-7538;

chris@collegechalktalk.com

TIPOFF EDITOR – John Akers, Basketball Times;

H: 704-849-8627; C: 980-422-1294;

johna19081@gmail.com

Goal is to surpass 1,000 memberships

If you haven’t done so already, it’s time to renew your membership in the USBWA for 2014-15.

Renewal notices were sent electronically to members in late April and will be followed by reminder emails later in the spring and summer to those who haven’t renewed.

The USBWA experienced record growth this past season, with membership climbing to 994, an all-time high for the association.

The goal this year is to surpass the 1,000 mark. We’re asking members to reach out to your colleagues, either at your own sports department or in the press box, and encourage them to join. For a membership application, go to the USBWA’s website at usbwa.com.

New USBWA president Dana O’Neil has made it her mission to recruit young writers and more women to join the organization and become actively involved in the leadership of the USBWA.

There are a number of reasons why membership in the USBWA makes all the sense in the world for sportswriters covering college basketball.

The annual member directory alone is worth the \$50 membership fee.

It contains the names, email addresses and phone numbers of head coaches and basketball contacts at all NCAA Division I schools and the writers who cover them.

Members receive discounts at Hilton Hotels, Hertz car rentals and Brooks Brothers clothiers, free in-season subscription to seven issues of *Basketball Times* and the right to vote for the USBWA’s men’s and women’s All-America teams and player, coach and freshman of the year awards for men and women.

The USBWA pays special attention to serving the needs of its members, especially in areas of access and working conditions for writers at basketball venues. When the NCAA drastically cut back on the number of courtside seats for the media at NCAA tournament games, the USBWA stepped in and led the way to restore a number of those seats.

When SIDs cried out for help with credentialing bloggers and reporters from websites, the USBWA offered to vet online entities and provide a list of those sites that the USBWA endorses to receive a credential.

To help spread the word, the USBWA has struck up a partnership with CoSIDA to communicate to its membership the free online credentialing service that the USBWA is offering SIDs.

BREAKFAST HIGHLIGHTS. One of the real joys for those attending the USBWA honors breakfast each year at the NCAA Men’s Final Four is to see the look of appreciation in those being honored.

This year was no different. Congratulations to all of the award winners: Brian Morrison of the ACC with the Katha Quinn Award for service to the media. Hall of Fame inductees George Lapidis (*Memphis*

Joe Mitch
USBWA
Executive Director



Commercial-Appeal) and past presidents Dick Jerardi (*Philadelphia Daily News*) and Robyn Norwood (*Los Angeles Times*); Eamonn Brennan of espn.com with the Rising Star Award; Dau Jok of Penn with the Most Courageous Award.

And finally, Kirk Wessler (*Peoria Journal Star*) with the Ray Marquette Award for outstanding leadership as president of the USBWA this past year. Kirk was terrific as president and showed he cared deeply for the organization. He always had the best interests of writers in mind during his presidency and was dedicated to the cause of helping them do their job.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL AWARDS DINNER. The USBWA officially closed the basketball season with the presentation of its player, coach and freshman of the year awards at a college basketball gala in Oklahoma City on April 14. USBWA President Kirk Wessler presented the Oscar Robertson Trophy to Doug McDermott of Creighton as national player of the year and the Henry Iba Coach of the Year award to Gregg Marshall of Wichita State. Jabari Parker of Duke received the Wayman Tisdale Freshman of the Year Award.

The event benefits the Tisdale Foundation to provide opportunities in sports for disadvantaged youth in Oklahoma City and the USBWA’s scholarship program.

SPORTS JOURNALISM PARTNERSHIP. The USBWA has entered into a working partnership with the Indiana University National Sports Journalism Center.

Under the direction of USBWA Hall of Famer and past president Malcolm Moran, the NSJC will provide the USBWA with faculty, staff and student support throughout the academic year.

They will provide content for the USBWA website and help the association contact prospective new members. USBWA members will also have the chance to participate in various initiatives on the campus in Indianapolis, dealing with major sports media issues of the day.

The NSJC is already handling the USBWA sports-writing seminar and competition that’s held in conjunction every year with the men’s Final Four. More than 50 students participated in the workshop this year in Dallas.

The NSJC is regarded as being the most comprehensive institute for the study of sports journalism in America. Through its programs, the center provides top quality instruction on sports media for high school students and veteran professionals.

McDermott, Parker, Marshall win USBWA honors

The winners of the Oscar Robertson, Wayman Tisdale and Henry Iba trophies come from America's heartland.

Creighton forward Doug McDermott is the winner of the USBWA's Oscar Robertson Trophy, given to the nation's top player, and Duke's Jabari Parker, a Chicago native, won the Wayman Tisdale Award, given to the nation's top freshman. Gregg Marshall of Wichita State is the winner of the Henry Iba Award, given to the nation's top coach. McDermott, Parker and Marshall were presented with their awards on Monday, April 14, at the Devon Energy College Basketball Awards Gala in Oklahoma City.



Doug McDermott



Jabari Parker



Gregg Marshall

McDermott, a 6-foot-8 senior from Ames, Iowa, becomes just the 19th player in the 58-year history of the team to earn three-time USBWA All-America honors. He finished the regular season as the national leader the nation in scoring (26.9). He scored 20 points or more in 26 of 30 games, including a career-high 45 points on a Senior Night victory over Providence. In the process, he moved up to seventh in NCAA history with 3,011 career points.

Parker, a 6-8 forward, averaged 19.2 points and 9.0 rebounds for Duke. His 16 20-point games are tied for second-most in ACC history, three shy of the record.

Parker scored in double figures in 17 straight games and in 32 of 34, breaking the Duke freshman record held by Gene Banks and Luol Deng.

Led by Marshall, Wichita State became the first team to end a regular season unbeaten since Saint Joseph's in 2004 and the first to enter the NCAA Tournament without a loss, at 34-0, since UNLV in 1991. The Shockers, who reached the Final Four in 2013, finished the season ranked No. 2 in the AP poll.

The USBWA's first-team All-Americans include McDermott, Parker, Arizona's Nick Johnson, Connecticut's Shabazz Napier and Louisville's Russ Smith.

Johnson, a 6-3 junior guard from Gilbert, Ariz., is the Pacific 12 Conference Player of the Year. He led the Wildcats in scoring (16.1) and is second in assists (2.8) and steals (1.2). He became the 48th member of Arizona's 1,000-point club in mid-January.

Napier, a 6-1 senior from Roxbury, Mass., led the Huskies in scoring (17.8), rebounding (6.0), and assists (5.2), on his way to becoming the only player in school history to lead the team in all three categories.

Smith, is a 6-0 senior from Brooklyn, N.Y. He was the American Athletic Conference's fourth-leading scorer (17.5), while ranking third in assists (4.8).

The second team featured four seniors, including forward Cleanthony Early of Wichita State; Iowa State forward Melvin Ejim, the Big 12 Conference Player of the Year; forward C.J. Fair of Syracuse; and Cincinnati guard Sean Kilpatrick. Kansas guard Andrew Wiggins, the Big 12 Freshman of the Year, rounded out the second team.

USBWA All-America Teams

First Team

Nick Johnson, Arizona, 6-3, 200, Jr., Gilbert, Ariz.
Doug McDermott, Creighton, 6-8, 225, Sr., Ames, Iowa
Shabazz Napier, Connecticut, 6-1, 180, Sr., Roxbury, Mass.
Jabari Parker, Duke, 6-8, 235, Fr., Chicago
Russ Smith, Louisville, 6-0, 165, Sr., Brooklyn

Second Team

Cleanthony Early, Wichita St., 6-8, 219, Sr., Middletown, N.Y.
Melvin Ejim, Iowa State, 6-6, 220, Sr., Toronto
C.J. Fair, Syracuse, 6-8, 215, Sr., Baltimore
Sean Kilpatrick, Cincinnati, 6-4, 210, Sr., Yonkers, N.Y.
Andrew Wiggins, Kansas, 6-8, 200, Fr., Vaughan, Ont.

O'Neil takes presidency; Gregorian joins rotation

Dana O'Neil of espn.com moved into her new role as USBWA president at the association's annual business meeting in Dallas during the recent Final Four, becoming just the second woman in the 58-year history of the USBWA to serve as president of the organization.

New district representatives were also elected: Nicole Auerbach, *USA Today*; Laura Keeley, *Raleigh News & Observer*; and Tom Noie, *South Bend Tribune*.

Vahe Gregorian, sports columnist for the *Kansas City Star*, was named third vice president, joining other vice presidents Pat Forde of Yahoo! Sports and Ed Graney of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

The full slate of officers and board of directors for 2014-15 (years on the board listed in parenthesis):

President, O'Neil; **1st Vice President**, Forde; **2nd Vice President**, Graney; **3rd Vice President**, Gregorian.

District I: Matt Vautour, *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (3rd term); **District II**: Auerbach (1st); **District III**: Keeley (1st); **District IV**: Kevin Brockway, *Gainesville Sun* (2nd); **District V**: Noie (1st); **District VI**: John Bohnenkamp, *Burlington Hawk Eye* (2nd); **District VII**: Randy Rosetta, *New Orleans Times-Picayune/NOLA.com* (2nd); **District VIII**, Robert Gagliardi, *Wyoming Tribune Eagle* (2nd); **District IX**, Bruce Pascoe, *Arizona Daily Star* (2nd); **Women's Liaison**, Mel Greenberg; **At-Large**, Eric Prisbell, *USA Today* (3rd); Chris Dortch, *Blue Ribbon* (3rd); **SID Liaison**, Brian Morrison, ACC (2nd); **New Media Liaison**, Chris DiSano, College Chalktalk (2nd).

Executive Director, Joe Mitch; **Tipoff Editor**, John Akers, *Basketball Times*; **Webmaster**, Ted Gangi.

Best Writing contest deadline approaches

The deadline for submitting stories and columns that were published during the 2013-14 college basketball season for the U.S. Basketball Writers Association's Best Writing Contest is June 16.

The contest is sponsored by the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame.

Entries can be submitted in five categories: column writing, moderate-length features, magazine-length features, spot news/game coverage and enterprise/investigative stories.

Only dues-paying members of the USBWA are eligible to enter the writing contest.

Members may enter more than one category. However, they may submit only one entry per category.

Plaques and cash prizes will be awarded in each category, with \$150 given for first place, \$125 for second, \$100 for third, \$75 for fourth and \$50 for fifth.

Winners will be announced in the *The Tipoff* and posted on the USBWA Web site.

Send all entries by email to usbwaofficers@gmail.com.

Entries must include the name of the category, the author of the story, the publication in which the article appeared and the date of the publication.

Frederickson, Wessler win top APSE honors

USBWA members Ben Frederickson, formerly of the *Casper (Wyo.) Star-Tribune*, and Kirk Wessler of the *Peoria Journal Star* took first place in the APSE writing contest. Wessler won for column writing in the 30,000-75,000 circulation category. Frederickson took first in breaking news, plus sixth in beat writing, for under 30,000.

Lodge Notes

Other multiple-winners included Todd Jones of the *Columbus Dispatch*, in three categories, and Zak Keefe of the *Indianapolis Star*, in two, both in the 75,000-175,000 category. Jones was fourth in explanatory writing, sixth in projects and 10th in features. Keefe placed second in both explanatory writing and beat writing.

Other members who placed in features included: Scott Dochterman of the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, fifth in 30,000-75,000, and Nathan Baird of the *Lafayette Courier & Journal*, sixth in under 30,000. In explanatory writing, Mark Zeigler of the *San Diego Union-Tribune* was fifth in over-175,000. In beat writing, Jesse Temple of *Fox Sports Wisconsin* was fifth in the over-175,000 category; Brendan Quinn, formerly of the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, was eighth in 75,000-175,000; Hugh Kellenberger of the *Jackson Clarion-Ledger* was third in the 30,000-75,000; and James Crepea of the *Montgomery Advertiser* was tied for sixth in 30,000-75,000. In column writing, Tom Shatel of the *Omaha World-Herald* was seventh and Luke DeCock of the *News & Observer* ninth in the 75,000-175,000 category. In breaking news, Jeff Goodman, formerly of CBS Sports, was fifth and Eric Prisbell of *USA Today* seventh in the over-175,000 category.

Breakfast with the U.S. Basketball Writers Association



Newly inducted Hall of Famers George Lapedes, Robyn Norwood and Dick Jerardi.



Writing seminar panelists Jim O'Connell, Dana O'Neil, Pat Forde and Kirk Wessler.



Most Courageous winner Dau Jok; Katha Quinn winner Brian Morrison, with Jim O'Connell; Rising Star winner Eamonn Brennan; outgoing President Kirk Wessler, with Joe Mitch.



Oscar Robertson Trophy winner Doug McDermott, with Kirk Wessler, Oscar Robertson, Greg McDermott.



Mel Greenberg, with Most Courageous winner Kirsten Moore.