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The

# NCAA memo urges better seating, access

At the urging of the USBWA, the NCAA's Basketball Oversight Committee sent a memo to every Division I school during the week of Oct. 10 that provides them with "best practices" for access and seating for media.

USBWA President Vahe Gregorian of the Kansas City Star and past president John Akers of Basketball Times met with the Oversight Committee during a meeting at NCAA headquarters in Indianapolis on June 26.

Gregorian and Akers presented the Oversight Committee with research and a suggested best practices for schools that was created by the chairmen for the USBWA's ad hoc committees for access (Kirk Wessler of the Peoria Journal Star) and seating (Luke DeCock of the News and Observer).

The best practices provided by the committee are recommendations to schools, rather than mandates.

"The NCAA recommendations are significant and a major step toward getting better access and seating for writers everywhere covering college basketball," said Joe Mitch, executive director of the USBWA.

Here is the memo sent to Division I schools:

"The men's basketball oversight committee met with

representatives of the United States Basketball Writers Association this summer at their request to discuss best practices pertaining to access to coaches and studentathletes, media seating at regular season games and security at competition venues. The NCAA staff solicited feedback from more than 30 media relations directors who work directly with Division I men's basketball programs and drafted recommendations we hope schools will consider using for the upcoming season to help promote college basketball throughout the year.

"Media should be seated as close to the court as reasonably possible, or with an unobstructed view of the court (versus behind standing fans or under overhanging roofs). If media is seated in areas accessible to the public, security should be provided before, during and after the game until fans are out of the building. All seats should have power and the facility should have working wireless, with IT support available to address issues. If media is not near courtside, schools are encouraged to provide monitors nearby where replays are viewable. It is also recommended that a designated pool reporter have basic means of communicating with the lead official to receive a rules interpretation or an explanation of a nonjudgement call following the game.

"With regards to access, we ask each school to consider having an open locker room period (or use another area outside of the locker room where studentathletes would be accessible) for at least 15 minutes following each game, after a reasonable cooling off period expires, to give the media access to coaches and players not participating in the postgame press conference. If space within the locker room is small, an alternate space could be used for postgame interviews with players and coaches. Other requests include providing interviews for at least 15 minutes before or after practice one day a week and having coaches be available to beat writers who regularly cover the team at least one day between scheduled games.

"Finally, we ask schools to consider providing security for the media when media parking is in a remote area and/or removed from the competition venue.

"Please do not hesitate to contact any committee member or NCAA staff member if you have additional questions. Thank you for your consideration and support of print media covering our great game."

# USBWA makes progress amid game's setbacks

KANSAS CITY – As we type this, basketball practice has commenced and optimism is running rampant on most campuses across the nation.

Maybe nothing illustrates that more than the scene at the University of Missouri: The Tigers went 8-24 last season but have made their fan base euphoric and are talking about being "the last team standing" because new coach Cuonzo Martin put together a top-notch recruiting class highlighted by the No. 1 prospect in the nation. Michael Porter Jr.

But the upbeat feeling that typically is pretty universal this time of year has to be tempered on campuses that might ultimately become embroiled in the FBI investigation of corruption and fraud that already led to the ouster of Rick Pitino at Louisville and has implicated assistant coaches at Arizona, Auburn, Oklahoma State and USC.

This already represents a seismic change in the game, because it makes more tangible and sinks teeth into the shadowy nonsense that was long ago exposed ("Sole Influence" by Dan Wetzel and Don Yeager was released in 2000) but unable to be properly addressed because of limitations in the NCAA's enforcement reach.

It's impossible to know now where this will all lead down the road, or even what immediate impact it could have. Best of luck with that first Top 25 and preseason NCAA Tournament picks.

The after-shocks no doubt will make for steep challenges for USBWA members in months to come, and

part of that in turn will test our relationships with those we cover.

As always, the USBWA is here for you to lend support in any way we can as we seek to deliver all the news about the game – the good, the bad and the ugly.

Toward that end, some updates about initiatives that we hope are moving closer to meaningful changes.

In the spring Tipoff, we told you about a fascinating development during our annual Final Four meeting with the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Committee:

Thanks to the words of outgoing president Ed Graney and board member Mark Zeigler and information gathered through the ad hoc committees on seating and access steered by John Akers, the NCAA's Dan Gavitt and David Worlock extended a special invitation.

To address ever-shrinking access and diminishing quality of regular-season media seating around the country, John and I had an audience with the Division I Men's Basketball Oversight Committee over the summer. We left encouraged it was the start of a conversation and being taken seriously. In mid-October, we learned how true that was:

Derived from its review of our presentation, the committee sent best practices recommendations to every Division I athletic director, media relations contact and commissioner.

It's important to note these are recommendations, not a mandate, but this is a breakthrough. We look forward to working with them to refine and further shape these policies that you'll find elsewhere in Tipoff.

Speaking of best practices, special thanks to board member Shannon Ryan for her work through our diversity committee: She conducted webinars with author and reporter Jessica Luther about reporting on domestic violence and sexual assault in sports and with award-winning Washington Post columnist Kevin Blackistone and Missouri School of Journalism professor Cynthia Frisby on racial bias in sports reporting.

And now this: In November, past president Malcolm Moran and I will be in San Antonio to meet with the Division I Men's Basketball Committee to present the case for a pool reporter in the room during its bracketing and seeding.

While there are reasons that this might not come to happen now, it's major progress that the committee welcomes us to make the case for more transparency to the process – one that is sure to have unforeseen wrinkles at the end of a season that's beginning with a tremor.



Visit: www.usbwa.com November 2017



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 – Vahe Gregorian, Kansas City Star, C: 816-799-6041; vgregorian@kcstar.com FIRST VICE PRESIDENT – Dave Teel, Newport News Daily Press; O: 757-247-4636; C: 757-897-2049; dteel@dailypress.com SECOND VICE PRESIDENT – Mike Waters, Syracuse Post-Standard; C: 315-416-6031; mwaters@syracuse.com THIRD VICE PRESIDENT – Seth Davis, The Fieldhouse/CBS; C: 917-225-5788; sethdavishoops@gmail.com EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – Joe Mitch, H: 636-227-9113; C: 314-795-6821; mitch@usbwa.org

#### BOARD MEMBERS

DISTRICT I – Matt Norlander, CBSSports.com, C: 203-313-7486; matt.norlander@gmail.com. DISTRICT II – Joe Juliano, Philadelphia Inquirer; C: 215-932-7413; jjuliano@phillynews.com DISTRICT III – C.L. Brown, The Fieldhouse; C:502-645-6142; cbrown@theathletic.com

<u>DISTRICT IV</u> – Jeff Greer, Louisville Courier-Journal; C: 502-593-9435:

j.allen.greer@gmail.com

<u>DISTRICT V</u> – Shannon Ryan, Chicago Tribune; 312-451-7692; maryshan00@yahoo.com,

sryan@chicagotribune.com

DISTRICT VI – Lee Barfknecht,

Omaha World-Herald; C: 402-871-5739;

leebee@cox.net

<u>DISTRICT VII</u> – Carlos Mendez, Fort Worth Star-Telegram; C: 817-917-2282;

cmendez@star-telegram.com.

<u>DISTRICT VIII</u> – Geoff Grammer, Albuquerque Journal; C: 505-206-0138;

ggrammer@abqjournal.com

DISTRICT IX – Mark Zeigler, San Diego

Union-Tribune; C: 619-246-3881;

markzeigler@msn.com

<u>WOMEN</u> – Mel Greenberg; C: 215-815-5943; poll@att.net

<u>AT-LARGE</u> – George Schroeder, USA Today; C: 541-953-4080; gschroeder@usatoday.com

<u>AT-LARGE</u> – Jeff Goodman, ESPN;

C: 508-397-8936; goodmanespn@gmail.com.

<u>SID</u> – Brian Morrison, Atlantic Coast Conference; C: 336-337-4896; O: 336-369-1002;

bmorrison@theacc.org

<u>NEW MEDIA LIAISON</u> – Randy McClure, Rush the Court; C: 415-608-1837;

rushthecourt@yahoo.com

<u>TIPOFF EDITOR</u> – John Akers, Basketball Times; H: 704-849-8627; C: 980-422-1294;

johna19081@gmail.com

WEBMASTER – Ted Gangi, C: 214-909-9314; ted.gangi@sportswriters.net

# Former executive director donates \$100,000 to USBWA

It hasn't been often in my role as executive director that I've received calls from people wishing to donate to the USBWA. A handful of times

A handruf of times maybe. Those that did contribute were members primarily and were generous in their giving, typically \$100 or so. A nonprofit organization like

the USBWA always welcomes donations.

The call that I received from former USBWA president and executive director Steve Guback last spring was different than most. He said he'd like to donate \$100,000 to the USBWA for an endowment fund to support the organization's scholarship program.

I was speechless.

"The USBWA made a difference in my life," said Guback, who was inducted into the USBWA Hall of Fame in 1989. "I want to give something back."

Guback wanted the endowment fund established with the USBWA to help students attend college. "It's important to me that I can help somebody else get a college education," said Guback, who was USBWA president in 1976-77 and executive director from 1977 to 1983. He also is a former Washington Star sportswriter.

"I had help when I was a student," Guback said. "I never thought I'd be able to go to college after high school. But I was able to get an Ernie Pyle scholarship from Indiana. If not for the scholarship, I probably would have been working at Jiffy Lube."

The endowment fund, known as the Steve Guback Scholarship Endowment, will provide scholarship monies to students in two ways.

The first will be a \$1,000 scholarship to the winner of a sportswriting contest at the Larry Donald "Full Court Press" seminar hosted by the USBWA each year at the NCAA Final Four. Donald is a past president of the USBWA who passed away in 2000.

The second way will be a \$4,000 scholarship, with \$1,000 given annually for four years to the son or daughter of a USBWA member. The scholarships will be awarded to students who have demonstrated academic excellence and achievement in citizenship and community involvement. A committee comprised of past presidents and the current USBWA president will select the recipient each year.

Joe Mitch USBWA Executive Director



"We are awed by and deeply grateful for Steve's remarkable generosity toward a great cause," said USBWA President Vahe Gregorian, sports columnist for The Kansas City Star. "Not only will it go towards a terrific cause, but it's a great reminder of the long-term impact USBWA membership can have – both in terms of how it was so important to Steve and what this will do for the recipients."

**USBWA MEMBER BENEFITS**. It's never too late to join the USBWA. Here are some of the member benefits:

• A printed membership directory listing contact information for members and all Division I men's and women's basketball coaches and the beat writers and columnists who cover them. The directory is a valuable resource and is worth the price of membership alone (\$50).

• An up-to-date online membership directory. To access all current member profiles, go to: http://directory. sportswriters.net.

• A 20-percent discount off the best available rate at participating Hilton properties. To activate the Hilton MVP card, visit the Member Center on the USBWA website.

• A 15-percent savings on regular-price merchandise at Brooks Brothers. Go to the Member Center on the USBWA website to apply for a Brooks Brothers Corporate Membership Card to receive the discount.

• A \$10 discount for ESPN.com Insider.

• Hertz discounts. Enter the USBWA's CDP code (1646337) when you make reservations online.

• A complimentary digital subscription to 12 monthly issues of Basketball Times.

• American Airlines discounts. All you need to do is add the USBWA account number (832783) to your AAdvantage profile when making reservations online at aa.com and login to the American Airlines AAdvantage account number (832783) and the USBWA's BusinessExtra account number (848168).

### 'Fieldhouse' highlights busy offseason

Lodge Notes

In a busy offseason on the job front, several writers joined former Sports Illustrated writer Seth Davis' new college basketball website, The Fieldhouse: C.L. Brown, formerly of ESPN.com; Brian Hamilton, formerly of SI; Dana O'Neil, formerly of ESPN.com; and Sam Vecenie, formerly of CBS Sports.

Others who lost jobs over the summer included Jimmy Burch, who was at the Fort Worth Star-Telegram for 35

years; Andy Katz, who had been at ESPN for 17 years; and Eamonn Brennan of ESPN.

Stewart Mandel, formerly of Fox Sports, and Nicole Auerbach, formerly of USA Today, also joined the Athletic's football website, The All-American. Brendan F. Quinn, formerly of Mlive.com, joined the The Athletic's Detroit site.In other moves, Pete Thamel moved from SI to Yahoo Sports; Luke Winn went from SI to join the NBA's Toronto Raptors as Director of Prospect Strategy; Lindsay Schnell moved from SI to USA Today; former Fox Sports writer Reid Forgrave joined CBS Sports; and Nick Baumgardner moved from MLive.com to the Detroit

Free Press. Todd Jones left the Columbus Dispatch to become a senior writer for Ohio State University.

Legendary Sports Illustrated writer Frank Deford, who was inducted into the USBWA's Hall of Fame last spring, died on May 28. ... Philadelphia Tribune sportswriter Donald Hunt was inducted into the Philadelphia Sports Hall of Fame on Nov. 2. ... Paul Morrison – who spent parts of eight decades at Drake as a student, SID and historian – celebrated his 100th birthday on July 25.

### Armstrong dominates USBWA's best-writing contest

Kevin Armstrong of the New York Daily News placed in four categories in the USBWA's Best-Writing Contest, including first place in spot news/game stories.

Armstrong also placed in moderate-length features (second), magazine-length features (fourth) and enterprise (fifth). His winning story is about legendary coach Bob Hurley's return to the gym where his teams practice that has been turned into a music hall.

'Hurley nods," Armstrong wrote. "He is 69, white haired and the winner of more than 1,100 games. A member of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, he grows nostalgic regarding an old gym in a gentrifying city. He is aware of the performing arts space being refurbished here in White Eagle Hall, the three-story edifice with faces of Polish luminaries looking down on whirring traffic. He recalls wall-to-wall battles upstairs, no frills, no fouls, a four-point line on the court, bingo cards flying and the raised decibels of his aria, a combination of sneakers squeaking and Hurley squawking.'

John Feinstein of the Washington Post placed in three categories, including a first place in moderatelength features for a story on Towson player John Davis, who was wounded in a drive-by shooting. Feinstein finished second in columns and third in spot news/game.

Mike Sielski of the Philadelphia Inquirer and Jesse Newell of the Kansas City Star both took firsts while placing in two categories apiece.

Sielski won in column writing for a story about the closing of St. Anthony, told through Sister Mary Alan Barszczewski and was third in moderate-length features.

"In1980, Sister Alan took over as St. Anthony's athletic director, and shortly thereafter, Hurley learned that Hudson County's association of athletic directors called a meeting at a bar, in an attempt to intimidate her," Sielski wrote. "She showed up early. It was all Hurley needed to know about the stout little woman, barely over 5 feet tall, a fire hydrant in a habit.

Newell finished fourth in column writing and won in enterprise reporting, for a story on Jamari Traylor's father's petition for clemency.

"There's only one problem: His request is one of 13,000 still pending with the Office of the Pardon Attorney," he wrote. "'It's a needle in a stack of needles," attorney Carl Folsom III said. "And the time is running out."

Mirin Fader of Bleacher Report took first place in magazine-length features for her story on Little League star Mo'ne Davis' quest for a Division I basketball scholarship

"Six years later, Davis is the ankle-breaking, dimedropping point guard for the Monarchs and still fearless as she develops into a Division I hopeful," Fader wrote. "Much like during her Little League run, she is the only girl on her team."

Luke Winn of Sports Illustrated and Jeff Eisenberg of Yahoo Sports were also multiple place-winners.

### **Best-Writing Contest**

#### Magazine-length feature

1. Mirin Fader (Bleacher Report). "Mo'ne Davis calls for the ball." This is the girl who captured America's attention when she threw a shutout in the Little League World Series. Now, she's playing basketball, the sport that could be closest to her heart. Fader gives us a well-written picture of a girl who, national attention aside, just wants the ball.

2. Shawn Krest (WRAL Sportsfan). A deep dive into how a Tar Heels tradition played a role in the 2017 title. 3. Andrew Kahn (espnW.com). Meet Sister Jean, the chaplain of the men's basketball team at Loyola in a well-crafted feature

4. Kevin Armstrong (New York Daily News). A descriptive piece about Villanova's Jay Wright and the program he thrives inside

5. Jeff Eisenberg (Yahoo Sports). Colorado's Derrick White uses the back door to enter a Division 1 program and, perhaps, even the NBA.

#### Column

1. Mike Sielski (The Philadelphia Inquirer). A heart-breaking story of the closing of St. Anthony High School in Jersey City, told through the story of Sister Mary Alan Barszczewski, who had dedicated her life to the place. A textbook example of how to use a smaller story to understand a larger one 2. John Feinstein (The Washington Post). The author of "Season on the Brink" takes another look at Bobby Knight and comes away shaking his head.

3. Jeff Eisenberg (Yahoo Sports). One of the reasons people enjoy NCAA sports is the athletes' emotion. This is a powerful look at the emotion carried by Jordan Bell, Oregon's 6-9 forward. 4. Jesse Newell (Kansas City Star). Pointing out how, no matter how well-coached a team is, the game often comes down to a split-second decision made on the court by someone else.

5. Gary Parrish (CBS Sports). Parrish examines his personal relationship with Bob Huggins, one of college basketball's most complex characters.

#### Moderate-length feature

1. John Feinstein (Washington Post). An emotional piece about Towson's John Davis who was wounded in a drive-by shooting and emerged with a powerful attitude and outlook.

2. Kevin Armstrong (New York Daily News). An observational piece about New York City when, with the NCAA tournament approaching, it becomes the center of the basketball world. Nice description. 3. Mike Sielski (Philadelphia Daily News). A compelling feature on the St. Joseph's play-by-play voice and his father, suffering from Parkinson's, and how they treasure the time they have left together. 4. Scott Gleeson (USA Today). One twin has cancer. The other remains healthy. A well-told story about how the two are helping each other.

5. Paul Doyle (Hartford Courant). The secret to UConn's success? How Geno Auriemma learns, then implements what he's learned. The specific examples are what make the story work.

#### Spot News/Game

1. Kevin Armstrong (New York Daily News). Bob Hurley, who coached at St. Anthony's in Jersey City, N.J., visits the gym that's not been turned into a music hall. A creative storytelling device for an emotional story. 2. Luke Winn (SI.com). A look back at the road Gonzaga took to the championship game. It started with a midnight hike and could end up changing the basketball program forever.

3. John Feinstein (Washington Post). The plane for the Michigan traveling party slide off the runway and into a ditch on its way to the Big 10 tournament. But the real story is how they figured it out.

4. Brian Hamilton (SI.com). Northwestern's first NCAA tournament meant a lot to a lot of people. 5. Jason King (Bleacher Report). North Carolina's championship win puts the shine back on one of the NCAA's most successful programs.

1. Jesse Newell (Kansas City Star). Jessie Traylor, father of Kansas forward Jamari Traylor, awaits a commutation of his life prison term on drug charges. This piece, built on the petition placed before President Obama, lets the letters, facts, and the effort tell the powerful story.

2. Pete Thamel (Sports Illustrated). Some good reporting with sources who sometimes don't want to talk. While a recent NCAA investigation has hit recruiting at the college basketball level, Thamel takes a look at the high school level.

3. Luke Winn (SI.com). A deep dive on Gonzaga's post game, which made the team an NCAA title contender. 4. Tom Archdeacon (Dayton Daily News). Three Chicago- born members of the University of Dayton basketball team have all been touched by gun violence and have all found a haven in Dayton.

5. Kevin Armstrong (New York Daily News). The closing of St. Anthony High School meant the end of its heralded basketball program.

### Nominations being taken for USBWA awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the following USBWA awards to be presented next April.

HALL OF FAME. Established in 1988, the US-BWA honors past and current members for their contributions to the organization and for their achievements in sports journalism. To be eligible, an individual must have a minimum of 20 years experience as a sports writer or college athletics administrator dealing with basketball. Send nominations to USBWA Executive Director Joe Mitch at mitch@usbwa.com.

KATHA QUINN AND MARY JO HAVERBECK.

Both awards recognize individuals in men's and women's basketball for their service to the media and for the inspiration they provide to those in the sports journalism profession. The awards are presented in honor of two former sports information directors who have passed away -- Quinn (St.John's) and Haverbeck (Penn State). Send nominations for the Quinn Award in men's basketball to past president Malcolm Moran at moranma@indiana. edu and Mike Waters, USBWA second vice president, at mwaters@syracuse.com, and to Mel Greenberg at poll@ att.net for the Haverbeck Award in women's basketball

MOST COURAGEOUS. The USBWA honors a player, coach, official or administrator who demonstrates extraordinary courage while facing adversity in life. First presented in 1978, it is the USBWA's oldest award. Send men's nominations to Seth Davis, USBWA third vice president, at sethdavishoops@gmail.com, and women's nominations to Greenberg.

RISING STAR. The USBWA honors a member who is under 30 and shows outstanding promise as a journalist covering college basketball. Send nominations to past president John Akers at johna19081@gmail.com.















# Dean Smith Award honors Dayton's Donoher

Tom Izzo

brain.'

2015, followed by Michigan State's

award," Donoher said. "It has special

meaning to me with Coach Smith's

name on it. On a couple occasions,

I went to visit with Dean to pick his

recognized for more than just their suc-

cess in basketball. They are chosen for

their principles of honesty and integri-

ty, for treating all people with courtesy

and respect, for accomplishments off

the court and for the impact they have

made on their community and the lives

Coaches selected for the award are

"I am honored to receive this

Former University of Dayton coach Don Donoher was named the winner of this year's Dean Smith Award given annually by the U.S. Basketball Writers Association to an individual in college basketball who embodies the spirit and values of the late North Carolina coach.

Donoher will be presented with the award at a dinner in Dayton on Dec. 13. Washington Post sportswriter John Feinstein, a past president of the US-BWA who suggested creating an award honoring Smith, will present the award to Donoher.

"Don Donoher was a great basketball coach, but has always been a better

person," Feinstein said. "At a time in college basketball when we're looking for people we can respect and admire unconditionally, Coach Donoher remains to this day a beacon of class, dignity and hope.

"I can't think of anyone who personifies the qualities that made Dean Smith a great man more than 'Mick' Donoher. Coach Smith would be very proud to have Don's name on the award in his honor."

Donoher is the third person to receive the Dean Smith Award. Former Georgetown coach John



of their players.

"Don Donoher exemplifies the reason we have the Dean Smith Award," said USBWA president Vahe Gregorian, sports columnist for the Kansas City Star. "Not only in terms of his distinguished career on the court but also because of his commitment to his community and forever making a difference in his players' lives."

In 2016, Donoher was inducted into the Dayton Region Walk of Fame for having a positive impact in

Thompson was the first recipient in the community. He has served as a volunteer for the American Red Cross and was chairperson for its 100th anniversary fundraising drive.

> He was a volunteer basketball coach at Bishop Fenwick High School in Middleton, Ohio. He remains very supportive of his local parish and gives back to the university, both of his time and with charitable contributions.

> Donoher retired in 1989 after 25 years as Dayton's head coach with 437 career victories, the most in school history. He led Dayton to nine NCAA tournament appearances, a NIT championship in 1968 and a runner-up finish in the 1967 NCAA championship game against UCLA. He played for the Flyers from 1951-54 and became the first coach to take his alma mater to the NCAA championship game after appearing in the tournament as a player.

> Donoher was inducted into the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame in 2015. In 1998, Dayton honored Donoher by naming an addition to the UD Arena after him.

> Net proceeds from the dinner will benefit UD's Champions and Scholars Fund and the Dean E. Smith Opening Doors Fund, which provides scholarships for undergraduates from lower-income families to attend college and for professionals in education and social work to pursue advanced degrees.

## UConn figures to return to head of women's race

#### By Mel Greenberg

USBWA Women's Representative

A year ago in this space, declaring a refreshing change, we proclaimed a wide open race in which the women's basketball title could go to the someone other than UConn for the first time in five seasons as the Huskies' domination would take a short hiatus.

That became true but not the until the NCAA semifinals in Dallas when Morgan William's buzzer-beating shot in overtime gave Mississippi State one of the greatest upsets in any sport, ending the UConn newly established NCAA record consecutive win streak for men or women at 111.

However, the ultimate glory went to seasonlong contender South Carolina, which downed its Southeastern Conference rival and established another storied chapter for coach Dawn Staley, the women's legend, who has become the USA Olympic coach through 2020.

As for the UConn hiatus heading into 2017-18, that has lasted just one game for these reasons - three returning USBWA All-Americans -Katie Lou Samuelson, Napheesa Collier, and Gabby Williams – a top freshman of the year candidate in Megan Walker, two other notable veterans in Kia Nurse and Crystal Dangerfield, and a star transfer in Azura` Stevens, formerly with Duke.

After consulting key USBWA members on the women's beat and several others, here is our preseason Top 25 and 15 more (alphabetical), who, among some others, received consideration.

Women's Preseason Top 25

- 1. Connecticut
- 2. Texas
- 3. UCLA
- 4. Baylor
- 5. Ohio State
- 6. Louisville
- 7. South Carolina
- 8. Oregon
- 9. Notre Dame
- 10. Mississippi State
- 11. Tennessee
- 12. Stanford
- 13. Duke
- 14. West Virginia
- 15. Maryland 16. Missouri
- 17. Michigan
- 18. Marquette
- 19. California
- 20. Florida State
- 21. South Florida
- 22. Texas A&M
- 23. Virginia
- 24. Oregon State
- 25. DePaul

Others Considered (alphabetical) - Arizona State, Chattanooga, Drake. Gonzaga, Kentucky, LSU, Miami, Michigan State, New Mexico State, Oklahoma, Ouinnipiac, Svracuse, Temple, Vanderbilt, Villanova.

# Michigan State, Bridges head men's rankings

Michigan State and sophomore forward Miles Bridges are favored to take home top honors this season, according to the USBWA's annual preseason poll.

The Spartans edged out Duke and Arizona in what was nearly a dead heat for first place. Michigan State received six of a possible 15 first-place votes, to Duke's five and Arizona's four.

Bridges, a forward who is returning for his sophomore season, received all but three botes as the preseason favorite to win the Oscar Robertson Trophy, given to the nation's top player.



Jalen Brunson, Notre Dame forward Bonzie Colson and Saint Mary's center Jock Landale.

Michael Porter of Missouri won a two-man race with Duke's Marvin Bagley III as the preseason favorite for the Wayman Tisdale Award, given to the nation's top freshman. Porter received nine votes, to Bagley's six.

Rounding out the top 25 are: Kansas, Kentucky, Wichita State, Villanova, Florida, USC, North Carolina, West Virginia, Miami, Cincinnati, Louisville, Notre Dame, Xavier, Minnesota, Purdue, Saint Mary's, Northwestern, Gonzaga, Texas A&M, UCLA, Seton Hall and Baylor.



1. Michigan State (6) 2. Duke (5) 355 3. Arizona (4) 352 332 4. Kansas 5. Kentucky 298 6. Wichita State 293 7. Villanova 281 8. Florida 235 9. USC 228 10. North Carolina 225 11. West Virginia 196 12. Miami 195 13. Cincinnati 178 14. Louisville 170 15. Notre Dame 156 16. Xavier 145 17. Minnesota 135 18. Purdue 113 19. Saint Mary's 106 89 20. Northwestern 21. Gonzaga 78 22. Texas A&M 74 23. UCLA 62 24. Seton Hall 53 25. Baylor 45 Others receiving votes

Men's Preseason Top 25

359

Rhode Island 28, Alabama 25, Virginia 16, Providence 11, Missouri 10, TCU 10, Iowa 7, Texas 7, Wisconsin 7. Florida State 2. Middle Tennessee 1.