



# TIPOFF

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## INSIDE THE TIPOFF ...

- Ryan: "We've Still Got The Game"
- Preseason Picks: Duke & Vandy
- "Clip-and-Save" All-Americans
- Double Duty for 'Donald' Winner
- Editor's Note

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## 2001-02: Year One A.L., "After Larry," for USBWA

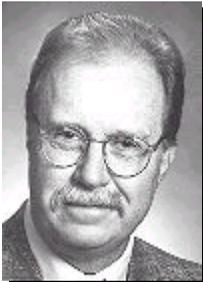
By JOE MITCH, USBWA Executive Director  
Missouri Valley Conference

It's been a little over a year now since the passing of longtime friend and associate Larry Donald.

It's hard to imagine going through an entire year without Larry's involvement and presence. He had a passion for this organization and championed the cause of sports writers everywhere, particularly those who covered college basketball.

He was a mentor to many young aspiring sports journalists and had the respect of countless basketball coaches around the country.

Larry had served as editor of the Tipoff for more than 15 years and his association with the USBWA goes back even further to the early 1980s when he became actively involved with the organization.



He served two terms as USBWA president – the only person to do so in the organization's history – and was elected to the USBWA Hall of Fame in 1992 at the age of 45, which at the time was the youngest anyone had ever been inducted into the Hall.

When word came down that Larry died suddenly last November in Pinehurst, N.C., while taking his daily morning walk, the news was a shock to all who knew him.

He appeared to be in the best of health. And he never seemed happier, enjoying his other passion – golf – while at the same time publishing what many considered the Bible of college basketball publications, "Basketball Times."

Larry's death leaves a void in the organization that will be impossible to fill. His memory, however, lives on with the naming of the USBWA journalism scholarships and best writing contest in his honor.

But, like life itself, the organization is moving on. This year we will be exploring some uncharted waters for the first time. Instead of the Tipoff being printed as in the past on newspaper stock, it will come each member's way via the internet. We will notify each member by e-mail when the Tipoff is up on the USBWA website and you'll be able to access it easily and at your convenience.

You'll also receive the Tipoff in a more timely fashion. In the past it would take as long as three weeks to get it in the hands of members when the Tipoff was sent in the mail. Now, you'll be able to read – and print – it from your computer as soon as it's posted to the website. For those of you who don't yet have internet

access and e-mail, we'll continue to send the publication to you in the mail.

Further, the USBWA directory, which will be sent to members later in November, will also be available on line. Writers and SIDs will be able to access other members with a simple click of their computer mouse. All of this modern technology comes to the USBWA by way of first vice president Steve "Tiger" Richardson, who also serves as executive director of the Football Writers Association of America (FWAA) and has successfully overseen the use of the internet for the FWAA. "We've had very few problems," says Richardson.

The group handling the computer applications for the USBWA is the same as the one that does the Football Writers' website. The USBWA has contracted Dallas-based HiTEX! Enterprises to oversee the project and has entered into a two-year agreement. HiTEX! is headed up by Ted Gangi, who formerly worked with CBS Sports and ESPN Radio, and Cody Monk, himself a former sportswriter. Look for other changes in the months ahead for the USBWA, all designed to provide more and better services to the membership.

Welcome to the 21st Century, USBWA!

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Jerry Colangelo. Ever heard of him?

Long before he became the owner of a world championship baseball team that plays in a municipally-funded stadium featuring a swimming pool behind the right field fence he was the hard-working general manager, and occasional coach of, the Phoenix Suns.

One night about 25 years ago he was in Providence, Rhode Island to scout the Providence-Connecticut game. He was there to check out Tony Hanson, a rugged 6-4 kid who was a great college player but a puzzle for the pros. It turns out he indeed was the classic tweener, and he never played in the league. By the way, there really was basketball in the state of Connecticut – lots of it – before my buddy Jim Calhoun showed up. Some people aren't aware of that.

When the game was over I found myself having a beer or two with Colangelo and the coach of the Providence Friars, a guy named Dave Gavitt. Heard of him? We closed up whatever it was and Gavitt asked us if we were hungry. Next thing you know we were at Gavitt's house and he was knocking on the back door. The coach had forgotten his keys. Wife Julie shuuffled out through the kitchen, opened the door and went back to bed.

Gavitt knocked out some scrambled eggs and bacon, explaining that one of his summer jobs when he a student at Dartmouth was that of a short order cook in Peterboro, New Hampshire. We had a great meal, and you can be assured we also had a lot of great hoop talk.

So what does this have to do with college basketball? Everything. And nothing.

It was indicative of the way college basketball was; I'll tell you that. This was pre-Vitale, pre-Nike, pre-AAU, pre-billion dollar NCAA contract, pre-pomposity, period. It was manageable, perhaps even intimate. We had relationships with the coaches. A huge arena was 12,000, and there were no luxury boxes. There weren't even any VIP rooms in most places. It was hardcore basketball for hardcore fans and even more hardcore writers and there was a clear sense that we were all in this together. There wasn't "Them vs. Us." Coaches returned phone calls and allowed you into practice.

Gavitt's SID was an energetic, witty and awesomely competent young guy named Mike Tranghese. He did everything for you but write the story, and there was no doubt that if push had ever come to shove he could have done that better than you could, too.

One day some of us were kibbitzing with Gavitt. For all I know it could have been 45 minutes before an important game. But I'll never forget him saying, "When is one of you guys going to find Mike Tranghese a job that will pay him what he's worth?" (Think of that the next time your local imperial coach treats his SID like a manservant). Anyway, last I heard, things worked out financially for both of them.

As Messrs. Colangelo, Gavitt and Tranghese have made their way onward and upward, I often think of that night. That's the way it should be for all of us.

Hope you don't think I'm just name-dropping here. I'm really

not. I'm simply frame-of-referencing my deeply-rooted love for college basketball. By that time I had already been a big college basketball fan for 20 years. Hey, I remember the O'Brien twins! I can't say I saw them, but I was in Philadelphia's Convention Hall on February 6, 1954 to see Tom Gola vs. Frank Selvy (OK, La Salle vs. Furman), and I was taken by my parents to see double-headers at both Convention Hall and the Palestra every Friday and Saturday night and I even saw Villavova beat Rio Grande and the legendary Bevo Francis in the Philadelphia Arena.

Those carefree days of yore aren't coming back. The bastards have won the battle. They have cut access, taken away our seats in favor of high-rollers, and made us feel it's a privilege to have five minutes of their precious time. It's only a matter of time before they take away the floor seating at the Final Four, and when that happens that may be it for me.

So what are we left with? Well, there still are fun places. We've still got the Palestra, Cameron Indoor Stadium and Allen Fieldhouse.

We've got rivalries. And we've got players.

Let's talk about players for a minute. While I regret the pre-mature loss of

star players to the NBA as much as the next guy, I still think college basketball is an entertaining product. I know – not think, I know – that out there in the Great Beyond there are scores of highly entertaining players who are bringing to college basketball what players of their type have always brought to this great game. They may be 6-5 centers or 5-9 guards or smart 6-3 tweeners who understand how to play the game, and who cares if they can't play in the NBA? It took me about five minutes, for example, to fall in basketball love last year with Ricardo Greer of Pitt. He was an industrious 6-5 kid who was too slow and too short to transport his cerebral game to the NBA, but who made watching Pitt an enjoyable way to spend two hours.

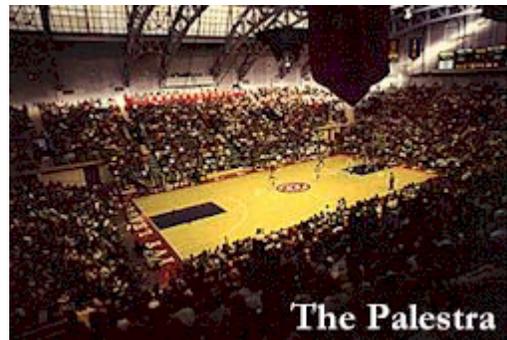
I know there are many Ricardo Greers out there.

There will always be Ricardo Greers out there.

That thought keeps me going.

We all have ample reason to feel sorry for ourselves, vis-a-vis the old days, but what's the use? We can't win. But the bastards can't take everything away from us.

We've still got the game.



The Palestra

### BIG-TIME BALLGAMES IN DECEMBER

Sat., Dec. 1	Kansas at Arizona, 2:30	CBS
Wed., Dec. 5	Michigan State at Florida, 7:00	ESPN2
Wed., Dec. 5	Temple at Duke, 9:00	ESPN2
Sat., Dec. 15	Arizona at Michigan State, 2:00	CBS
Tue., Dec. 18	Duke vs. Kentucky, 9:00	ESPN
Sat., Dec. 29	Louisville at Kentucky, 4:00	CBS

ALL TIMES EASTERN

## USBWA: Duke Reigns and Vandy is Dandy

Defending NCAA champion Duke sits atop the annual men's preseason poll taken by members of the USBWA Board. If the Blue Devils win a second straight title in April, it will mark the second time they have accomplished that feat in the last 12 years.

The Blue Devils lose 2000-01 consensus player of the year Shane Battier, but return four starters from the team that defeated Arizona in the title game last spring in Minneapolis. Among those are preseason USBWA All-America guard Jason Williams.

The USBWA's men's preseason Final Four also includes Illinois, Maryland and Kentucky. The Terrapins lost to Duke in the Final Four last spring, but return a strong nucleus to challenge the Blue Devils in the Atlantic Coast Conference. Virginia also made the USBWA's Top 10 at No. 9, but there are no other ACC teams in the Top 25, including perennial power North Carolina.

Illinois is favored to win the Big Ten and Kentucky, which advanced to the Sweet 16 last season before losing to UCLA, is a favorite in the Southeastern Conference.

The Big 12 has never had a team advance to the Final Four since its inception in 1996-97, but both No. 7 Kansas and No. 8 Missouri appear poised to make runs to Atlanta. The Tigers lost to Duke in the tournament's second round last March.

Overall, the Big 12 has the most teams in the USBWA Top 25 with five. Oklahoma checks in at No. 16, Oklahoma State at No. 21 and Texas at No. 25.

**Men's Top 25:** 1. Duke; 2. Illinois; 3. Maryland; 4. Kentucky; 5. UCLA; 6. Florida; 7. Kansas; 8. Missouri; 9. Virginia; 10. St. Joseph's; 11. Iowa; 12. Georgetown; 13. Boston College; 14. Fresno State; 15. Temple; 16. Oklahoma; 17. Michigan State; 18. Memphis; 19. Stanford; 20. Cincinnati; 21. Oklahoma State; 22. Connecticut; 23. Gonzaga; 24. Syracuse; 25. Texas.

Led by 6-6 junior center Chantelle Anderson, Vanderbilt is the USBWA's choice as the preseason favorite to win the women's national championship.

Anderson led the nation in field goal percentage a year ago, hitting a remarkable 72.3 percent of her shots, on her way to 21.2 points per game and returns to try to lead the Commodores to their first national title. Anderson joins three other returnees who all averaged in double figures last season.

Vanderbilt, of course, will have to first contend with the perennially powerful SEC and in-state rival Tennessee. Gwen Jackson and the the Lady Vols are picked 3rd. The two SEC powers – among five SEC schools in the Top 25 – sandwich Connecticut, which is led by All-America candidates Sue Bird, Swin Cash and Diana Taurasi.

The Big 12 features three of the top nine teams. Marsha Sharp's Texas Tech Lady Raiders, led by Plenette Pierson, are at No. 4 and Oklahoma, with returning conference player of the year Stacey Dales and LaNeisha Caufield, is ranked fifth. Angie Welle leads Iowa State, which is picked No. 9.

The ACC has two teams among the top ten with No. 6 Duke, led by All-America candidate Alana Beard, and No. 8 N.C. State. No. 7 Louisiana Tech, which joins the Western Athletic Conference this season, and Pac-10 favorite No. 10 Stanford round out the top 10.

**Women's Top 25:** 1. Vanderbilt; 2. Connecticut; 3. Tennessee; 4. Texas Tech; 5. Oklahoma; 6. Duke; 7. Louisiana Tech; 8. N.C. State; 9. Iowa State; 10. Stanford; 11. Colorado; 12. Old Dominion; 13. Baylor; 14. George Washington; 15. Penn State; 16. Washington; 17. Florida; 18. Purdue; 19. Notre Dame; 20. Georgia; 21. Maryland; 22. St. Mary's; 23. Arizona State; 24. Colorado State; 25. LSU.

## RICK BOZICH'S "CLIP-AND-SAVE" ALL-AMERICANS

*Welcome to the "clip-and-save" version of the USBWA All-America teams. Why do I say clip and save?*

*Easy. I think everybody should clip and save our list and measure it against the list we deliver at the end of the season. I'll predict that all of the final first-teamers are on our list, but that we have probably missed a second- or third-teamer. We usually do.*

*But that is what makes the USBWA All-America teams so intriguing. I'd argue that they're more accurate than the other preseason teams because we collect a great cross section of opinion from across the country in our conference call. As impossible as it is to cut the season-ending list to 15 players, it is nearly as tough to cut the initial list to 24.*

*Hey, I lobbied to include Dajuan Wagner of Memphis, who would have been one of the top 10 picks in the 2001 NBA Draft if he had decided to skip college basketball. If he's a Top 10 pro, wouldn't you think he's one of the top 24 college players, even if he has yet to play a game? If you've seen him play, you know the kid is the next Stephon Marbury/Allen Iverson/Isiah Thomas. His name is missing. I got outvoted. There was a reluctance to include an untested freshman, as well as a reminder that we can add him to a later list.*

*No problem. That's what I like about our list. We always have a spirited but informed debate during the teleconferences where we pick the teams. Our selectors usually represent every corner of the nation, so the team does not become stuffed with players for only the elite conferences. (See inclusion or Chris Marcus of Western Kentucky, Dan Dickau of Gonzaga and Josh Davis of Wyoming for proof.)*

*That said I think we're off to a solid start. We hit the usual high notes with Jason Williams of Duke, Tayshaun Prince of Kentucky, Frank Williams of Illinois, Casey Jacobson of Stanford and Marcus, which is about as close as you can get to a consensus preseason All-America squad.*

*But we also had solid support for Marvin O'Connor of St. Joseph's, Melvin Ely of Fresno State and Sam Clancy of USC.*

*So clip and save. And then compare our first list to the final list we'll post in March. I predict we'll be flexible enough to make some changes, but we won't have to make many. Other than Dajuan Wagner, of course.*

**MEN'S WATCH LIST:** Lonny Baxter, Maryland; Troy Bell, Boston College; Keith Bogans, Kentucky; Carlos Boozer, Duke; Caron Butler, Connecticut; Sam Clancy, USC; Nick Collison, Kansas; Josh Davis, Wyoming; Dan Dickau, Gonzaga; Juan Dixon, Maryland; Ronald Dupree, LSU; Melvin Ely, Fresno State; Reggie Evans, Iowa; Jason Gardner, Arizona; Udonis Haslem, Florida; Casey Jacobsen, Stanford; Chris Marcus, Western Kentucky; Roger Mason, Virginia; Marvin O'Connor, St. Joseph's; Tayshaun Prince, Kentucky; Kareem Rush, Missouri; Frank Williams, Illinois; Jason Williams, Duke; Vincent Yarbrough, Tennessee.

**WOMEN'S WATCH LIST:** Chantelle Anderson, Vanderbilt; Alana Beard, Duke; Sue Bird, Connecticut; Swin Cash, Connecticut; LaNeisha Caufield, Oklahoma; Danielle Crockrom, Baylor; Stacey Dales, Oklahoma; Linda Frohlich, UNLV; Deanna Jackson, UAB; Gwen Jackson, Tennessee; Zuzi Klimesova, Vanderbilt; Sheila Lambert, Baylor; Kelly Mazzante, Penn State; Brandi McCain, Florida; Mandy Nightingale, Colorado; Plenette Pierson, Texas Tech; Nicole Powell, Stanford; Diana Taurasi, Connecticut; LaToya Thomas, Mississippi State; Angie Welle, Iowa State. (Compiled by Wendy Parker, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*)

## Double Duty for ‘Donald’ Winner

By STEVE WIEBERG / USA Today

She's a former high school valedictorian now in pre-med and pulling down a 3.97 grade-point average at Albion (Mich.) College – while playing both soccer and basketball for the Britons. In what spare time she can find, she volunteers at a local hospital, at a local nursing home, at a local center for exceptional families.

**Katie McCabe** makes a distinguished inaugural recipient of the USBWA's Larry Donald Scholarship.

The daughter of Detroit Free Press writer Mick McCabe was selected this fall for the \$1,000 annual award, designated for the children of USBWA members entering or currently enrolled in a four-year college. The scholarship was established in Donald's name after the USBWA Hall of Famer and past president died of a heart attack last November.

Molly Mullin, an associate professor of anthropology at Albion, pointed out McCabe's promise in a letter of recommendation to the USBWA. "Last semester," she wrote, "I remember one week when some of the students in my Honors seminar were grouching about the amount and difficulty of the reading assigned. Katie never complained and, one day that week when she was scheduled for a difficult presentation in the class, I passed her at 8 a.m. as she was out running on a country road, in the freezing rain. That afternoon, she did a wonderful job on the presentation and then left for a basketball game. I remember thinking how it is students like Katie who help remind me that my work ... is worthwhile."

McCabe, a senior at Albion, beat out a number of impressive applicants. Runners-up were:

- **Sara Barnhart**, a freshman majoring in sports medicine in Georgia's Honors Program and the daughter of Atlanta Journal-Constitution writer Tony Barnhart.

- **Charles Milbert**, the son of the Chicago Tribune's Neil Milbert, who's a senior at Gettysburg (Pa.) College majoring in psychology and education.

McCabe will receive the scholarship each year she remains in school, up to four years. Additional recipients will be selected annually.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

As Joe Mitch so eloquently wrote in his column, the USBWA is boldly entering a new era without one of its most trusted and dedicated soldiers, Larry Donald. Larry's commitment to the USBWA and his love of college basketball was unmatched. It is with that kindred spirit that we take one of his most cherished institutions, the Tipoff, to a new level.



While we can never duplicate Larry's depth of knowledge and warm and longstanding college basketball relationships, we can continue to publish the Tipoff with the same enthusiasm that Larry put forth for more than 15 seasons. And, we are publishing it in a way that will make it more accessible and easier to read for the USBWA's membership.

As the new editor of the Tipoff, and successor to the "Editor Emeritus," I will strive to make the Tipoff as informative and concise as the membership has come to know it. And, now you have a new way to read it, on line at the new USBWA website, [www.usbwa.com](http://www.usbwa.com).

In addition to the Tipoff, the website offers the complete membership directory, information about the various annual USBWA awards, and links to everything college basketball. There is even an on-line bookstore featuring selections from member authors. The site will continue to grow and evolve as we get input and feedback from the membership. And, you can send your comments to us anytime at [webmaster@sportswriters.net](mailto:webmaster@sportswriters.net). Any and all suggestions are welcome.

Along with my business partner and CEO of HiTEX! Enterprises, Cody Monk, I want to extend a special thanks to Joe Mitch, Bob Ryan and Steve Richardson, whose vision has allowed us this opportunity to serve the USBWA. For us, the opportunity is as exciting as an overtime Final Four game – and we have seen a few of those!

So read on and enjoy another great season of college roundball! See you in Atlanta, Dallas or points in between.

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