

USBWA benefits extend beyond directories and contests

Kansas is still a basketball school. Syracuse is still a Big East school.

Mike Krzyzewski is still two wins short of Bobby Knight's 902. Jim Calhoun, the defender, is still a contender (and still on probation).

College basketball remains poised in suspended anticipation, with the USS Carl Vinson refitted for the Michigan State-North Carolina takeoff on San Diego waters. You can almost smell those deodorant classics and palm tree invitations beyond the horizon.

The upshot: There is still plenty of time to join the USBWA or renew your membership for the 2011-12 season.

The USBWA is an inclusive organization, open to writers, broadcasters, photographers, sports information directors and almost anyone involved in the coverage of men's and women's college basketball.

The USBWA actively seeks more participation from student journalists, who can learn aspects of the trade while developing relationships with experienced journalists.

In recent years, the USBWA has conducted a seminar for aspiring sports reporters during the Final Four and has awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to the winner of a writing contest. This season, the USBWA plans to resume a \$2,000 undergraduate scholarship available to the daughter or son of an active member. The applications period runs from

Sept. 1 to April 15.

For students, an annual membership costs \$25 – half a tank of gas, unless you cover the Persian Gulf Conference. Regular memberships are \$50, and retirees can stay active for \$20.

With more members, the USBWA can raise a stronger voice whenever vital issues of access and equity arise. The persistent leadership of executive director Joe Mitch and recent presidents helped increase the membership to about 900 despite a recession and a convulsive media environment. The new goal: 1,000 members, a level the USBWA has never attained since the beginning in 1956.

The costs of membership are low, and the benefits are notable. First, the published directory is comprehensive and extremely useful. It contains contact information for individual members, conferences and all Division I schools, along with TV schedules and an archive of annual awards.

Members get to vote for All-District and All-America

Lenox Rawlings
Winston-Salem Journal
President



teams, the Oscar Robertson Trophy given to the nation's top player, the Henry Iba Award given to the coach of the year, the women's awards for national player and coach of the year and the Wayman Tisdale Award for the top freshman.

There are cash prizes for winning categories in the USBWA writing contests, free subscriptions to *Basketball Times* and *Rivals.com*, a hotel program now under negotiation and a car program with *Enterprise* and *National*.

But those are just perks. The real benefit is getting to know people who enjoy hanging around basketball courts, on land or sea.

Tar Heels, Sullinger are USBWA favorites; Davis, Rivers split freshman vote

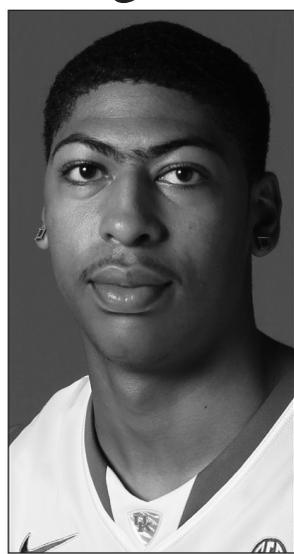
North Carolina is the nation's preseason No. 1 team, according to the U.S. Basketball Writers Association's board of directors, though it's a tight race at the top along with No. 2 Ohio State and No. 3 Kentucky.

The Buckeyes' Jared Sullinger was a runaway favorite to win the Oscar Robertson Trophy, given to the nation's best player.

Duke's Austin Rivers and Kentucky's Anthony Davis finished in a tie as frontrunners for the Wayman Tisdale Award, given to the nation's top freshman.

Sullinger took 11 of 15 votes as the favorite for the Oscar Robertson Trophy. The Tar Heels' Harrison Barnes received three votes and Xavier's Tu Holloway had one.

Sullinger also was the only unanimous selection for the USBWA's preseason All-America team. Barnes received 14 votes, and Wisconsin's Jordan Taylor received 13. Kentucky's Terrence Jones received eight votes, and Holloway and Connecticut's Jeremy Lamb



Anthony Davis



Austin Rivers

was tied for the final spot on the team with four votes apiece.

Others who received votes: John Henson, North Carolina 3; John Jenkins, Vanderbilt 3; Perry Jones, Baylor 3; Anthony Davis, Kentucky 1; Marcus Denmon, Missouri 1; Ashton Gibbs, Pittsburgh; Drew Gordon, New Mexico 1; Scoop Jardine, Syracuse 1; Darius Johnson-Odom, Marquette 1; Kris Joseph, Syracuse 1; Thomas Robinson, Kansas; Tyler Zeller, North Carolina 1.

Davis and Rivers received four votes apiece in the preseason voting for the Wayman Tisdale Award. Andre Drummond of UConn received three votes, and Davis' Kentucky teammates Michael Kidd-Gilchrist and Marquis Teague received one apiece.

Other freshmen named to the Wayman Tisdale Preseason Watch List: Bradley Beal, Florida; Chane Behanan, Louisville; Khem Birch, Pittsburgh; LeBryan Nash, Oklahoma State; Adonis Thomas, Memphis; Josiah Turner, Arizona; Cody Zeller, Indiana.

USBWA Board of Directors' Top 25

1. North Carolina (11)	394
2. Ohio State (3)	376
3. Kentucky (2)	374
4. Connecticut	336
5. Syracuse	329
6. Duke	322
7. Vanderbilt	283
8. Louisville	278
9. Florida	249
10. Memphis	242
11. Pittsburgh	220
12. Xavier	179
13. Baylor	176
14. Kansas	170
15. Arizona	162
(tie) Wisconsin	162
17. Alabama	107
18. Texas A&M	88
19. UCLA	87
20. Marquette	85
21. Michigan	80
22. Cincinnati	71
23. Gonzaga	65
24. Michigan State	62
25. Missouri	60

Others receiving votes – Florida State 52, Temple 44, California 34, Washington 27, Texas 15, New Mexico 14, Belmont 13, Villanova 13, Butler 12, Creighton 8, Brigham Young 6, Purdue 6, West Virginia 5, UNLV 3, Mississippi State 3, Virginia Commonwealth 2, Wichita State 2, George Mason 1, Utah State 1, Washington State 1.

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It's time to start thinking about this year's awards nominees

With the start of another season, it's also time to begin thinking about candidates for the USBWA's annual awards program.

Members are encouraged to submit names of individuals to be honored by the association at the USBWA's awards breakfast in April in New Orleans, site of this year's NCAA Final Four.

Here's a refresher course of the various awards presented by the USBWA:

HALL OF FAME. There have been 59 inductees in the USBWA Hall of Fame since it was created in 1988 to honor members – past and present – for lifetime achievement and contributions to the USBWA. Individuals who have been enshrined regard the Hall of Fame to be the highest honor bestowed on a member.

To be eligible, candidates must have a minimum of 20 years of service as either a sportswriter or individual associated with the USBWA.

Last year's honorees were Bill Connors, *Tulsa World*, posthumously; Mickey Furfari, *Morgantown Dominion Post*; and Art Spander, *San Francisco Examiner*.

A select committee comprised of Hall of Fame members and others associated with the organization reviews candidates for the Hall of Fame and vote on those to be inducted.

KATHA QUINN AWARD. This award is presented in memory of the former St. John's sports information director who passed away in 1989 of cancer following a courageous battle with the disease. The award recognizes members who either excel at servicing the media or provide an inspiration to those in the profession.

In Katha's case, she did both.

Sports information directors have primarily been recipients of the award. Past SID winners include Oliver Pierce of Gonzaga last year; Roger Valdiserri, Notre Dame; Skeeter Francis, ACC; Rick Brewer, North Carolina; Al Shrier, Temple; Bill Hancock, Big Eight; Tim Tolokan, Connecticut; Mike Tranghese, Providence and the Big East; Jack Watkins, Missouri Valley Conference; Jim Marchiony, NCAA; Steve Kirschner, North Carolina; John Paquette, Big East; and Chris Fallon, NIT.

Former USBWA presidents and Hall of Fame members Malcolm Moran (Penn State) and Jim O'Connell (Associated Press) oversee the selection process for the USBWA, working in conjunction with USBWA second vice president Kirk Wessler of the *Peoria Journal-Star*.

Joe Mitch
USBWA
Executive Director



MOST COURAGEOUS AWARD. This is the USBWA's oldest award, having first been presented in 1978.

It is given to individuals in college basketball – players, coaches, administrators and officials – who have demonstrated extraordinary courage in life dealing with tragedies or hardships.

For the past two years, the USBWA has been presenting Most Courageous awards in both men's and women's basketball.

Last year's recipients were Rice University forward Arsalan Kazemi, the nation's first Iranian-born

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NCAA Division I basketball player, and Bilqis Abdul-Qadir, a Memphis guard who is believed to be the first Muslim women to play Division I basketball with her arms, legs and hair covered during games in accordance with her faith.

Nominations for the most courageous award are to be submitted to USBWA third vice president Dana O'Neil (ESPN.com) at dgoneil@msn.com.

RISING STAR AWARD. This is the USBWA's newest award, an idea first presented to the board a couple of years ago by now first vice president John Akers of *Basketball Times*.

The award recognizes journalistic excellence by members who are under 30 years of age. Last year's recipient was Kevin Armstrong of the *New York Daily News*.

Please submit nominations to Akers at johna19081@gmail.com.

USBWA SCHOLARSHIP. Applications are now being accepted for one \$2,000 USBWA scholarship to be presented in January to the son or daughter of a USBWA member planning to attend college in the fall of 2012 or are currently enrolled in college.

Individuals applying must demonstrate outstanding achievement in scholarship and citizenship.

For an application, go to the USBWA's website at usbwa.com

USBWA's role in women's hoops is 'all about the legacy'

Greetings everyone, and here's to another exciting season of men's and women's collegiate basketball coverage from along the sidelines on press row or behind the basket as in the situation in some of the arenas we attend to perform our activity.

Back in the 1988-89, not long after future USBWA Hall of Famer Malcolm Moran (2005) became president, our good friend and colleague gave me a phone call at the *Philadelphia Inquirer* to tell me two things:

"I'm now the president and can set the agenda, and one of my priorities is to formally establish women's coverage with all that entails, including awards, as part of the USBWA structure.

"Someone has to do the organizational work, and since there is no one better for the task at hand, congratulations, Mel, you have the job."

And so back in 1990 in the days of a robust national economy, I was able to call in a bunch of IOUs and get some co-sponsors to pony up for our very own breakfast, which was first held in Knoxville, Tenn., at the Women's Final Four.

A few years later, a fledgling young and energetic writer on the women's beat with the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* named Wendy Parker came along and became a prime helper in going through administrative procedures setting up the women's breakfast and helping to run the show through the years.

One perk Malcolm did allow me, as a reward for being so agreeable, was that we could kind of fashion things in our own image beyond the major awards, as long as what we did was reasonable.

Since there was some catching up to do, at that first breakfast we gave Tennessee's Pat Summitt and Leon Barmore co-coach of the decade awards and honored former Old Dominion star Anne Donovan, an Olympic gold medalist, as our international player of the decade.

We also established a Pioneer Award to cite someone whose work in association with the sport – be it player, coach, SID or writer/ broadcaster – was of such magnitude to foster increased media attention to help grow the women's game.

Over the years, such notables were given the honor, many times as a surprise announcement, as Nancy Lieberman, former Immaculata coach Cathy Rush, former Associated Press national women's writer Chuck Schoffner.

(Aside, I am not in the Immaculata movie hitting theaters Oct. 21 and no one is portraying me. Dickie "Hoops" Weiss is not depicted giving Mighty Macs rides

to restaurant, either.)

Along the way, the USBWA women's awards continue to be one of the highlights that schools include when members from their institutions are cited and CoSIDA members remain a backbone of support and strength.

In more recent times, because of the economy, some things have scaled back, but the breakfast has continued and we are grateful to ESPN for picking up the tab.

Of course, many on the women's beat, because of the situation at newspapers, are no longer at publications they worked for decades but have found a life in the new technology on the Internet and remain viable.

Wendy, in fact, who is no longer at the Atlanta paper, sits on our board with the designation New Media. Necessity during the bankruptcy at the *Inquirer* caused yours truly to pull the "retirement," mechanism in April, 2010, but as stated time and time again, "not to mow lawns."

In fact, since there was no replacement, per se, when I left, I have found myself making "guest star" appearances in print for the Inky when needed.

Otherwise, find me still doing most of what was done in the past, but at melgreenberg.com for the blog or on twitter at @womhoopsguru. And the email is poll416@gmail.com. The other in the directory is also still good.

If anything, the one positive from the exit is no longer being a hostage of inside the office and enjoying the freedom of pursuing self-appointed projects such as enhancing the women's side of USBWA.

And so it was that an inspiration occurred while participating on the recent board's teleconference to organize for the season that perhaps the time has come to expand our awards list to match more of the men's awards and, more importantly, start putting names in association such as the Hank Iba coach of the year and Oscar Robertson player of the year.

I already gave our leader Joe Mitch the OK to handle a weekly national player of the week on the women's side, which will be new this season.

And I am working on setting up a women's board beyond the few persons who now informally deliberate for formal actions.

Wendy and I have already begun discussing potential

Mel Greenberg Women's Representative

candidates for trophy/plaque enduring names, while other individuals are being solicited to add to the input. We have some strong names already in the pool. The theme when the time comes later on to roll out the announcements this season will be "It's All About The Legacy."

Thus, the plan would be to tie the great names of the women's game in the past with the coaches, players and other individuals of the present.

Any of you are invited to join with suggestions, since we have a little bit of time before pulling the trigger. I already got one great idea from the AP's Jim O'Connell.

I think the public reaction will be great and our event, however we decide to hold it at the Women's Final Four in Denver, should be well received.

Perhaps a place could be found, if we have a sponsor, to permanently house the major trophies for public display, the way the Robertson trophy exists in Consecro Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

When completed, our list subject to getting the OK from the group would look something like this.

Player of the Year. (existing but adds a name).

Coach of the Year. (existing but adds a name).

Freshman of the Year. (existing but adds a name).

All Freshman Team (new if approved).

Our Version of the Katha Quinn award. (New, and we have a strong candidate and longtime USBWA member for its name that would be well received.)

Good Guy. (New but perhaps called something else due to gender considerations.)

NCAA Scoring and Rebounding Champions. (New with names, especially if a sponsor can be found.)

Most Courageous. (Existing for men and women and called as is already stated).

Pioneer Award. (Existing, but would re-name Maggie Dixon Award with a change in definition. Looking for a prime sponsor.)

USBWA Membership Application Form

Send a check for \$50 and let the USBWA make your job of covering college basketball easier. Or go to usbwa.com to subscribe. For questions, call 314-444-4325.

Name _____

Newspaper/Publication/Website/College _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

HomeAddress _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Office Telephone _____ CellPhone _____

Fax _____ Email Address _____

USBWA
1818 Chouteau Avenue
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You might be someone's mentor without even knowing it

There is no eluding the magic of Oct. 15. I know, the NCAA messed around and inserted language like "Friday closest to Oct. 15" into its by-laws. But to college basketball fans, "Oct. 15" stirs passion the way "Pitchers and catchers report" does for baseball fans.

Coaches finally get to work out their entire team on a daily basis. We finally get to see how the newcomers might gel with the veterans in a structured setting. Our offseason speculations encounter confirmation or rebuke. Will the teams we cover meet expectations? Will they show cracks that might lead to bigger trouble? Are they sowing seeds of a March Madness surprise?

But the best part is we get to tell the stories. That's our job.

I grew up on the campus of a Division I university. My father was a professor at Bradley, and we lived across the street from the old airplane-hangar fieldhouse (a place, it must be noted, where the great Oscar Robertson went 0-for-3). Players lived on our block. I was smitten by the game, by the intimacy, by the omnipresent excitement.

And by this. I read the daily reports filed by the late Dick Lien in the *Peoria Journal Star*. Some of you might remember Dick, a longtime USBWA member who would die too young while covering Bradley on a road trip in December 1994. He was tall, round, prematurely gray, fidgety and possessed with a biting wit.

Dick had a gift for description and a unique ability not to waste words. Two examples leap to mind.

Bradley's Robertson Field House had an intoxicating scent I've never encountered in hundreds of other arenas. I could not properly describe it. But here was Dick: "Nowhere else has man and nature ever blended so perfectly the smells of analgesic and warmed popcorn with frost shaken from dark woolen coats." Yes, that was it, exactly.

Then there was his lead in March 1980, when Bradley made its first NCAA Tournament appearance in 25 years and lost a heartbreaker to North Carolina, because of a turnover in the final seconds. One word topped Dick's game story: "Damn!" It was a perfect summation, reporting the frustration of players and coaches while simultaneously giving voice to the emotions of a city in love with its team. Dick did it without being a homer, too. Credit and criticism punctuated his story, in all the right places.

It is no stretch to say I would not be a sportswriter if not for Dick Lien. I did not major in journalism, but Dick

gave me my first job in the business and became my mentor. By the time he died, I was his boss.

I bring this up for two reasons. One, it's helpful to remember why we got into this business, whatever our individual reasons, and why most of us still love it almost as much as we love to gripe about it. And two, we never know what aspiring young talent is looking up to us, wanting to be us, needing direction.

It's too easy these days to shrug off the kids and tell them to do something else. I still believe there always will be a place for good reporters and writers, and part of our job as USBWA veterans is to reach out to them – wherever they are – and nurture the future.

Kirk Wessler
Peoria Journal-Star
Second Vice-President



Money talks as schools, conferences continue to walk

That money rules college athletics ranks right next to the breaking news item of a dog biting a man. Once a dirty little secret, it is now an accepted tenet in our games' handbook.

Butler's back-to-back appearances in the national championship game was more than a nostalgic throwback to the days of yore. It was a stunning upset of the financial hierarchy, like pulling the rug on college sports' own Ponzi scheme.

But even the most cynical among us, those who realize that amateurism is a relative term, has been stunned at the latest lesson in athletics' economics.

It is dollars with little sense.

The conference realignment merry-go-round has overtaken the coaches' carousel, spinning universities, their teams, their fans and their alums to far-flung and often geographically nonsensical regions of the globe.

Colorado in the Pac-12?

Sure, explain that to your second grader.

Twelve teams in the Big Ten? Doesn't even compute with the new math.

We will survive this, of course. I was a student when Penn State announced it would join the Big Ten and was convinced that it would be the end of the world. Ohio State as a rival? Michigan? What of Syracuse, Maryland and all of those Eastern teams we'd played for years? And no more Pitt-Penn State series?

Yet, here we are.

But this isn't about one team making one move only after it exhausted every attempt to convince others on the Eastern seaboard to join forces.

This is about seismic shifts and tectonic movements that will leave a fault line.

None of us will be the better for it.

Because while this certainly isn't about basketball, it's frankly not about football, either.

This is about chasing down the highest bidder.

When a detective is trying to solve a crime, the old adage – follow the money – usually works and the same

is true here. For the crime being perpetrated on college athletics, simply follow the money.

The promise of big television revenues has essentially changed the college landscape for good. The conferences that we've known, the rivalries that we've cherished are slowly but continually disappearing to be reborn into a mishmash hodgepodge of mascots.

(Full disclosure. I work for ESPN and ESPN is in charge of many of those big television revenues, including the straw that broke Texas A&M's back – the Longhorn Network. Is the network culpable? You bet. Is it the lone or darkest of the black hats in this rodeo? Absolutely not. If ESPN didn't pay the money someone else would).

Plenty of people have pointed out that what colleges and universities are doing is merely following the American dream, of going after the greener pastures of profit.

Which would make sense if the university presidents who are making these calls made decisions that affected them and only them. Instead their choices affect thousands. By moving Syracuse and Pittsburgh from the ACC to the Big East, Nancy Cantor and Mark Nordenberg effectively put the first nail in the 32-year-old Big East's coffin, handed their Olympic sports teams travel itineraries designed by masochists, trashed the allegiances their alums have felt for years and cast aside traditions and rivalries like yesterday's leftovers.

What makes all of this especially galling is that everything that is happening right now in college sports flies in the face of what college athletics pretend to be about. We ask our "student-athletes" to compete with integrity and to show collegiality. They cannot profit off of their own successes or even their own likenesses.

Dana O'Neil
ESPN.com
Third Vice President



Yet the people who sit in the ivory towers on campus have shown about as much integrity and collegiality as Democrats and Republicans. They have bickered like petulant children and defended their own actions by blaming others.

Eight years ago, Boston College left the Big East for the ACC, leaving behind ill will that still exists even today. Some of the remaining Big East members were so infuriated by the Eagles' audacity that they threatened a lawsuit to stop the departure.

"This is a case that involves broken commitments, secret dealings, breaches of fiduciary responsibility, the misappropriations of conference opportunities and predatory attempts to eliminate competition."

Those were the words opined by none other than Nordenberg, the president now leading Pitt down the same Tobacco-lined Road Boston College once followed.

Nordenberg said he is different. He is doing this for the betterment of his university.

Truth is, the ACC doesn't offer better football and certainly not better basketball. There aren't any natural or long-standing rivalries here. Travel will be a nightmare.

But reading the accounting ledgers as well as the tea leaves revealed one shining nugget: the ACC has a \$155 million television contract. The Big East does not.

And now more than ever, money talks.