

OUR GAME. OUR COMMUNITY. OUR FUTURE.



2019-24 STRATEGIC PLAN



PRE GAME

Legendary journalist Sally Jenkins in an article she wrote for *The Washington Post* said she once asked her father, Dan Jenkins – himself a 25-year veteran with *Sports Illustrated* – why he liked women’s college basketball so much. He immediately rattled off a list of characteristics and attributes that included teamwork, dedication, style of play, passion, and a visible commitment to being not only a student of the game but also a student in general. “They’re full of surprises. They’re not spoiled. You can get good seats. Must I go on?” he said.

The story was published in 2009, but it might as well have been 2019. Today’s women’s basketball leaders found the same quality attributes and characteristics Sally’s father cited when they set out to develop a five-year strategic plan for the sport through 2024. Women’s basketball was then – and still is – something special, something unique, something worth protecting and enhancing.

That’s why this strategic plan was created, and it is as unique as the game it seeks to advance. First, strategic plans typically regard a company, organization or department. Few *sports* have one. Second, this plan is so inclusive that it’s hard to identify a group or constituency that was *not* involved. If a strategic plan is only as good as its creators, then this one has some staying power. This is not a plan for Division I women’s basketball, but for *NCAA Women’s Basketball*. All stakeholders were consulted, and all voices were heard.

Our plan will serve as a reminder to *all of us* why we do what we do. We are a community, we believe in our game and our student-athletes, we stand by our principles, and we win in life. Are those lofty claims? Perhaps for some. But when it comes to women’s basketball, we’re all in ... and we can’t wait to move forward!



OPENING TIP

OUR FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE

WHO WE ARE

NCAA Women's Basketball provides student-athletes the opportunity to realize their full potential in pursuit of academic and athletic excellence, compete for championships, and be recognized as role models for and engage with local, national and global communities.

OUR VISION

WHAT WE STRIVE TO ACCOMPLISH

Unify and grow the women's basketball community; empower student-athletes to achieve their full potential; celebrate and elevate the game; and create an inspiring experience for all involved.

OUR VALUES
WHAT UNITES **OUR** COMMUNITY

TEAMWORK

We define success in terms of what we accomplish together.

INCLUSION

We embrace diversity and celebrate differences.

PASSION

We aspire to be the best we can be in all we do.


EXCELLENCE

We succeed in education, basketball and our lives.

INTEGRITY

We honor and respect the game and each other.

“WE TIP WITH
EXCELLENCE
AND **INTEGRITY**”

The background of the slide features a dark, blue-toned silhouette of a basketball court. Several figures are visible, including a player in the foreground holding a basketball, and other players and spectators in the background. The scene is set against a bright, hazy sky, suggesting an outdoor or well-lit indoor court.

WHAT'S AT STAKE — WHY NOW?

As we approach the 40th anniversary of NCAA Women's Basketball and the 50th anniversary of Title IX, perhaps the better question is, "Why not now?" There is an expectation in the women's basketball community – perhaps even within the larger intercollegiate athletics community – that we grow and develop the game, and that we not be limited to what's happening on the court. NCAA Women's Basketball is in a position of strength and influence. We want to build our community in a way that ensures NCAA Women's Basketball is a launching pad for young women, not just a sport they happen to play in college.

GAME ON

 **WOMEN'S
BASKETBALL**

2019-24 STRATEGIC PLAN



HOW THIS PLAN IS DIFFERENT **WHAT DISTINGUISHES US**

This isn't the first time that women's basketball has engaged in a planning exercise, but it is the first time it has been approached from a holistic, cross-divisional perspective. Past efforts thoughtfully or primarily focused on Division I matters such as the structure and format of the Division I Women's Basketball Championship, how to market the sport and whether scholarship maximums should be reduced to increase parity. Those are important issues, to be sure, but this plan has a broader intent to apply to the **entire women's basketball community**. That's why we're being intentionally collaborative among stakeholders in all divisions. Everyone affected must feel engaged in the process for any strategic plan to be developed and implemented.

ALIGNMENT

HOW WE **CONNECT** WITHIN **OUR** **COMMUNITY**

We are a community that embraces and celebrates inclusive excellence. That means we establish and maintain an inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and career opportunities for coaches and administrators from diverse backgrounds. Inclusive excellence improves the learning environment for all student-athletes and enhances greatness within our community.

KEEPING SCORE

WHO WE'VE CONSULTED

OUTREACH

Pretty much everyone who touches women's basketball has contributed to this plan. More than 1,000 women's basketball stakeholders have been involved in the feedback process to this point. You name them, we've presented them the opportunity to engage in the process:

NCAA GOVERNANCE

- Division I Council
- Division II Management Council
- Division III Management Council
- Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee
- Division I Women's Basketball Committee
- Division II Women's Basketball Committee
- Division III Women's Basketball Committee
- Women's Basketball Rules Committee

KEY PARTNERS

- Women's Basketball Coaches Association
- NCAA Women's Basketball Student-Athletes
- WNBA/NBA
- ESPN
- USA Basketball
- Women's Basketball Hall of Fame
- Kay Yow Foundation
- Pat Summitt Foundation

STAKEHOLDERS

- Women Leaders in College Sports
- Conference Commissioners
- NCAA National Office Leadership
- Former Coaches
- Women's Sports Foundation
- National Federation of State High School Associations
- Coordinators of Officials
- NCAA Corporate Champions and Partners

CRUNCH TIME

We know who we are, what we represent,
what makes us unique and what we want to achieve.

Now it's time to execute strategies that lead us to victory.

WE'RE BUILDING OUR PLAN ON THE FOLLOWING GOAL AREAS:

- **Leadership**
- **Transformational Student-Athlete Experience**
- **Quality Competition**
- **Memorable Championships**
- **Building Affinity**

With those as our guideposts, our strategic plan will elevate our game and our community. We're intentional about the steps we're taking to achieve our goals. We've set a course that will benefit those who play the game – and those who oversee it – in all three divisions for years to come.

LEADERSHIP

NCAA Women's Basketball leads within and beyond the sport to unify and strengthen the game and our community.

OBJECTIVES

Drive awareness of and advocate for women's basketball.

- Engage cross-divisional constituents in decision making.
- Collaborate with organizations making significant contributions to the game.
- Increase pool of qualified individuals to serve in important roles in the women's basketball governance structure.
- Engage in strategically aligned initiatives relating to girls and women in sport.

Position coaches as ambassadors for the sport.

- Collaborate with the Women's Basketball Coaches Association and other key stakeholders to advance the professional development and retention of coaches and increase opportunities for women and minorities.
- Encourage coaches to embrace their role, understand their value and share their voice to grow the game at the institutional, local, regional and national levels.
- Collaborate with the Women's Basketball Coaches Association and other key stakeholders on initiatives designed to advance a culture of integrity and student-athlete well-being.

Promote fiscal responsibility and sustainability.

- Affirm and broadly communicate the value-add that women's basketball brings to the athletics department and the community.
- Promote opportunities for revenue generation and identify ways to strategically manage expenses.

Engage with organizations that oversee and administer youth basketball programs.

- Explore strategic partnerships with organizations leading youth development programs.
- Collaborate with USA Basketball, AAU, National Federation of State High School Associations and other organizations to advance skill and athletic development of youth.

TRANSFORMATIONAL STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPERIENCE

NCAA Women's Basketball shall be the gold standard for how participation in intercollegiate athletics serves as an integral component of the higher education experience and prepares student-athletes for life after college.

OBJECTIVES

Support and promote student-athlete well-being.

- Engage the NCAA Sport Science Institute (SSI) and the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports to develop and execute a plan to address health, safety and wellness in women's basketball.
- Collaborate with SSI to deliver and promote mental health awareness best practices at the campus level for women's basketball.

Facilitate effective post-athletics transition, career preparation and leadership development.

- Offer opportunities for student-athletes focused on careers in all aspects of the business of sports (e.g., broadcasting, coaching, officiating and athletics administration).
- Explore collaborative opportunities to provide programming and events focusing on post-athletics transition.

QUALITY COMPETITION

NCAA Women's Basketball shall administer and shape the game to showcase the commitment student-athletes and coaches devote to skill development and team play at the highest level.

OBJECTIVES

Improve competitive parity.

- Create a long-range, division-specific strategy to address issues affecting competitive parity.
- Evaluate current and proposed playing rules, bylaws and legislation that may affect competitive parity.

Explore innovations to elevate the game.

- Work with sport and playing rules committees on fundamental rules changes to enhance the game and accentuate its unique identity.
- Explore and implement innovative uses of technology.

Enhance the existing national officiating program.

- Explore ways to increase the number of qualified officials in the pipeline.
- Enhance the skill development, evaluation and accountability of officials.
- Increase awareness of and appreciation for the officiating program.

MEMORABLE CHAMPIONSHIPS

NCAA Women's Basketball Championships are the pinnacle of the student-athlete experience. We commit to providing the best and brightest stage on which to celebrate our game.

OBJECTIVES

Ensure quality championship format, site selection and management.

- Review championship formats (e.g., various seeding/bracketing procedures; regional locations).
- Enhance site selection and management strategies.
- Take intentional steps to leave a women's basketball legacy in the host community.
- Evaluate ongoing opportunities for joint championships.

Ensure integrity in team selection, seeding and bracketing.

- Evaluate selection tools and resources (e.g., RPI, NCAA Evaluation Tool, technology).
- Continually evaluate policies and procedures in order to align with the evolution of the game.
- Offer additional educational opportunities for membership, media and fans (e.g., mock selections).

Optimize the student-athlete experience at NCAA championships.

- Explore ways to create a more impactful celebration from invitation to the conclusion of competition (with an emphasis on the preliminary rounds).

Optimize the fan experience at NCAA championships.

- Identify synergetic opportunities for game promotions and fan engagement.
- Explore ways to better market the championships.

BUILD AFFINITY

The unique identity of NCAA Women's Basketball is all about the connection people feel to the game, student-athletes and coaches.

OBJECTIVES

Build cohesion, vision and awareness to enhance the future of the game.

- Define the unique identity of and create branding to promote NCAA Women's Basketball.
- Arm the women's basketball community with a unified message that promotes the women's basketball brand.
- Expand the use of social media platforms and other technologies to advance the brand.

More deeply connect the women's basketball community by telling our compelling story.

- Engage former student-athletes (including WNBA/professional players) to stay engaged in the sport and serve as ambassadors for the game.
- Develop a consortium of media to advise and deliver intentional messaging to elevate the game.
- Invite current or former NBA players and other high-profile individuals to advocate the value of basketball for girls and women.

Grow the fan base.

- Create and implement action strategies to grow the fan base and increase attendance.
- Engage key partners to create collaborative marketing strategies.
- Foster and enhance the connection our audiences experience to the game, student-athletes and coaches by strategically recognizing our past, celebrating our present and anticipating our future.

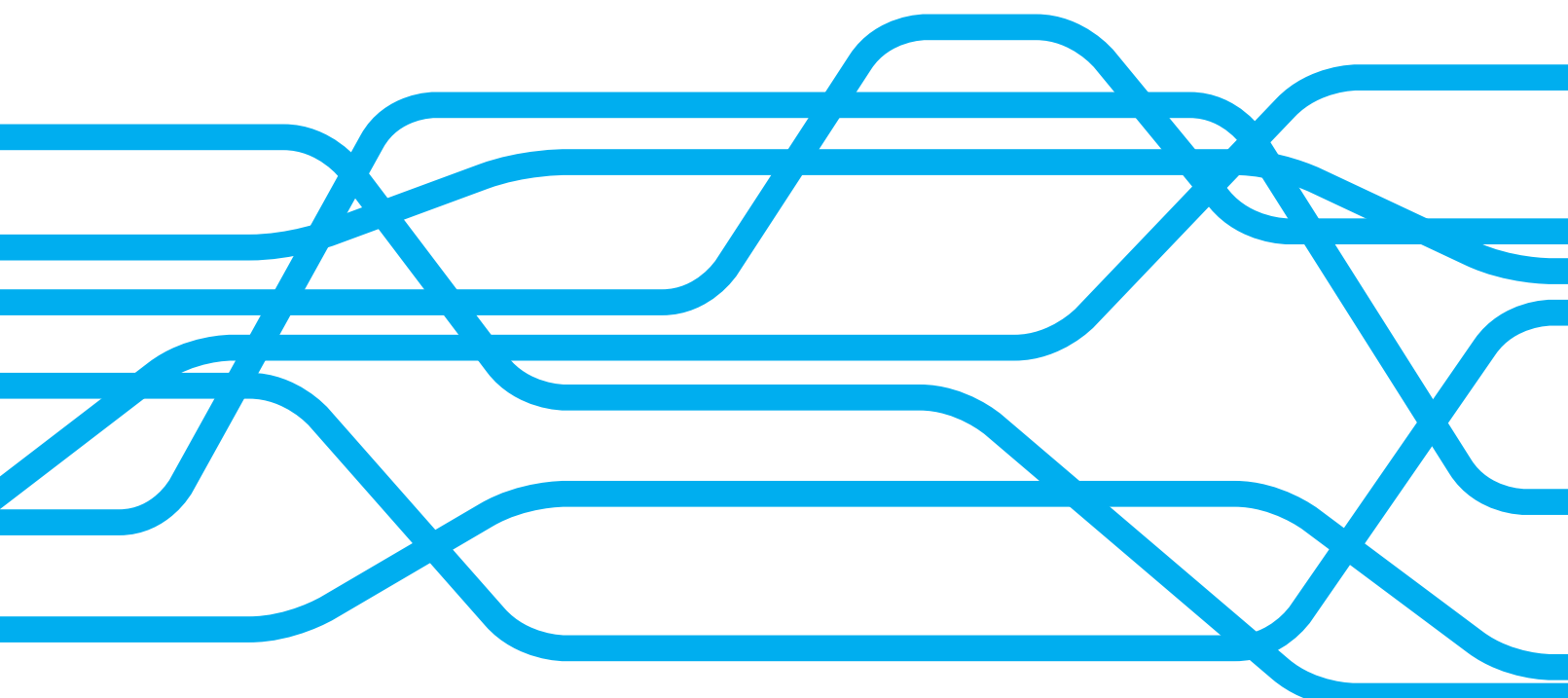
THE STAT

SHEET

HOW WE'LL MEASURE SUCCESS GUIDING THE PROCESS

To help move us in the right direction, we've appointed a **steering committee** to provide oversight and monitor the plan's implementation. The steering committee includes the chairs of all three divisional women's basketball committees, the chair of the Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee, the NCAA championships staff managers from Divisions II and III, and the NCAA vice president for women's basketball.

The steering committee will assess the plan continuously and devote attention and resources accordingly, perhaps even tweak some of the action steps where necessary. **This plan is a dynamic, living document, and we'll continue our outreach to everyone involved in all three divisions to keep us on track.**



NCAA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL STRATEGIC PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

2018-19

RHONDA BENNETT

Chair of the Division I Women's Basketball Committee
Senior Associate Director of Athletics/Senior Woman
Administrator, University of Nevada, Reno

RICH ENSOR

Chair of the Division I Women's Basketball
Oversight Committee
Commissioner, Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference

MELANIE FORD

Chair of the Division II Women's Basketball Committee
Assistant Director of Athletics/Senior Woman
Administrator, Shepherd University

KARIN HARVEY

Chair of the Division III Women's Basketball Committee
Head Women's Basketball Coach, Montclair State
University

LYNN HOLZMAN

Vice President for Women's Basketball
NCAA

MEREDITH CLEAVER

Staff Liaison to the Division I Women's Basketball Committee
NCAA

KELSEY JONES

Staff Liaison to the Division II Women's Basketball Committee
NCAA

KELLY WHITAKER

Staff Liaison to the Division III Women's Basketball Committee
NCAA

BINH NGUYEN

Staff Liaison to the Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee
NCAA

The Strategic Plan Steering Committee is populated by the chairs of the Women's Basketball Oversight Committee and Division I, II and III Women's Basketball Committees. The members represented will change with the committee cycle and term expiration.

IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE



Quarterly reports to the Steering Committee.



Midyear reports to the Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee and the Divisions I, II and III Women's Basketball Committees.



Annual reports to targeted stakeholder groups and available to the membership broadly.



In year three, the Steering Committee will conduct a comprehensive review of the plan to evaluate, revise and create new strategies as determined by the progress of the plan.



In year four, the Steering Committee will determine the timeline to begin the next strategic planning cycle.

BE A CHAMPION!

In sport, only those who win the final competition call themselves champions. However, when it comes to the NCAA Women's Basketball strategic plan, we all are champions – not in the context of competition but in the sense that we champion the game, the student-athletes, the coaches, the administrators, and all the other guardians of our sport.

Planning strategically positions us as champions. As such, we pledge to implement our plan to champion all who touch the game.



CHAMPIONS ON THE COURT, IN THE CLASSROOM, AND IN LIFE.