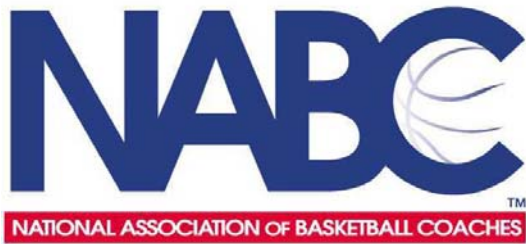


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Winona State's John Smith Repeats As 2008 State Farm/NABC Division II Player of the Year

KANSAS CITY, MO. (March 26, 2008) – Senior forward **John Smith** of Winona (Minn.) State University capped a brilliant career for the Warriors with his second straight State Farm Division II Player of the Year award from the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC).

Smith will receive his award at the AT&T/NABC Guardians of the Game awards show on Sunday, April 6, in San Antonio.

This marks the third consecutive season that the 6-8 Smith has led the Warriors to the NCAA Division II Elite Eight and Winona has won 29 straight games and 95 of its last 100 games entering a quarterfinal contest with Grand Valley (Mich.) State University on Wednesday night in Springfield, Mass.

Smith, who resides in Johnsburg, Ill., is Winona's all-time scoring leader with 2,219 points, a career 15.5 average. This season, Smith has averaged a career-high 17.7 points in 36 games and also has a career-best 98 assists with 103 blocked shots. He ranks second in Division II with 420 career blocked shots and ranks eighth in career rebounds with 1,317, a 9.2 average.

Stan Gourard of Southern Indiana is the last individual to earn player of the year honors in consecutive seasons, having accomplished that feat in 1995 and 1996.

About the National Association of Basketball Coaches

Located in Kansas City, MO, the NABC was founded in 1927 by Phog Allen, the legendary basketball coach at the University of Kansas. Allen, a student of James Naismith, the inventor of basketball, organized coaches into this collective group to serve as Guardians of the Game. The NABC currently claims nearly 5,000 members consisting primarily of university and college men's basketball coaches. All members of the NABC are expected to uphold the core values of being a Guardian of the Game by bringing attention to the positive aspects of the sport of basketball and the role coaches play in the academic and athletic lives of today's student-athletes. The four core values of being a Guardian of the Game are advocacy, leadership, service and education. Additional information about the NABC, its programs and membership, can be found at www.nabc.com.

About State Farm

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