

Conference USA Celebrates

National Girls and Women in Sports Day

Conference USA and its member institutions are proud to join in the nationwide celebration of the 19th Annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day on February 9. On this day, thousands of sport educators, coaches, athletes, athletics administrators and corporate partners sponsor events and participate in activities to show support for the day.

Conference USA recognizes the value of sports participation for women and the important role it plays in preparing student-athletes for the future. The annual celebration of NGWSD continues to be a part of the league's "Be There" campaign (see right), developed by the conference to elevate public awareness about C-USA women's athletics.

All conference members have planned special events and activities in observance of the day. The conference office, in conjunction with corporate partner, **Aeropostale**, provides a special gift for its member institutions to distribute. Highlights and coverage of the league's activities will be featured on the official website, conferenceusa.com, and during the league's women's basketball telecasts on the C-USA TV Network.

The theme for the 19th annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day is "More Than A Game." NGWSD is observed in all 50 states with community-based events, award ceremonies and activities honoring the achievements and encouraging participation of girls and women in

sports.

The Women's Sports Foundation organized the first event in 1987 to honor Olympic volleyball player Flo Hyman for her athletic achievements and her efforts to ensure equality for women's sports. Hyman died suddenly while competing in Japan in 1986. NGWSD has since evolved into a day to acknowledge the past and recognize current sports achievements, the positive influence of sports participation and the continuing struggle for equality and access for women in sports. NGWSD is sponsored jointly by organizations of the National Girls and Women in Sports Coalition: Girl Scouts of the USA, Girls Incorporated, the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport, the Women's Sports

Foundation, and the YWCA of the U.S.A. For more information, visit ngwsdcentral.com.

February 9, 2005
"More Than A Game"



Conference USA is in its third year of the "Be There!" campaign, a comprehensive marketing and promotional program developed by the league to help elevate public awareness about women's athletics and the many benefits it provides.

The "Be There!" campaign is part of the conference's ongoing commitment to promoting opportunities for women in all aspects of intercollegiate athletics. C-USA recognizes the value of sports participation for women and the important role it plays in preparing student-athletes for the future.

The "Be There!" campaign also encourages community service, charitable work, tutoring, mentoring and serving as a role model.

Television commercials will appear on select ESPN, ESPN 2, ERT and C-USA TV Network telecasts during the 2004-05 season. The campaign will also include radio commercials, print advertising and promotional activities at C-USA championships and regular season contests.

In addition, C-USA institutions have incorporated the "Be There!" message into their marketing activities for women's athletics.

C-USA Schedule of Events

January 30

DePaul - Honoring Blue Demon current female student-athletes.

Memphis - Honoring Anne Pufahl. Local community girls'/women's groups are invited. Student-athletes and coaches will be speaking with the girls in attendance after the game.

February 5

Houston - Honoring Chandi Jones and the 2003-04 women's team. Jones' jersey will be retired.

Southern Miss - Girl's Sports Festival, featuring sports fundamental clinic for girls.

TCU - Honoring Teri Davis. Free admission for local girls' organizations. Pregame sports clinic for Girl Scouts. Postgame poster signing.

February 11

East Carolina - Special NGWSD-themed promotions and halftime exhibition.

February 13

Charlotte - Honoring Mary Lou Babb and Dale Halton. Organizations involved are: Girl Scouts, Charlotte Mecklenburg School System, Cabarus Schools and Charlotte Sports Commission.

Marquette - Special audience of youth girls' basketball teams. NGWSD-themed promotions.

February 18

Cincinnati - Sports Clinic and Health Fair. History of NGWSD presentation. Special audience of Girl Scouts, female sports teams, pom-pom girls and cheerleaders.

Saint Louis - Honoring Erma Bergman, Audrey Kissel, Barbara Hoffman, members of the Baseball Hall of Fame. Organizations involved

are: Girl Scouts, Catholic Youth Council and local area girls' basketball teams.

February 20

Louisville - Special audience from the CardsFit Fit 4 Me program. Pregame chalk talk about benefits of sports participation.

UAB - Local girls' and women's organizations are special invitees.

February 26

USF - Honoring Joanne Young. Postgame reception.

Tulane - NGWSD presentation from female student-athletes. Postgame autograph session.

AÉROPOSTALE

C-USA would like to thank **Aeropostale** for providing special gifts for all C-USA member institutions to distribute as part of the league-wide celebration of NGWSD.

Be There Profiles: One female student-athlete from each C-USA institution is featured below. For more profiles and in-depth stories, visit us at conferenceusa.com.

Charlotte



Sophomore center **Kryston Obie** defines perseverance. She is a team leader that returned to the 49ers lineup this season after missing the 2003-04 season due to an injury. As a freshman, she was the 49ers starting center, helping lead the team to their first ever NCAA appearance.

Obie continues to exemplify perseverance, despite struggling with an injury earlier this season. She has returned to the lineup stronger than ever, making an impact for the team.

A role model on the court and in the classroom, Obie holds a 3.7 GPA with a double major of communication studies and African-American and African Studies.

She also helps others in her community by tutoring inner city children and participating in team sports clinics for children in the Charlotte area.

Cincinnati



Julie DuPont finished her volleyball career as not only one of the top players ever to don a UC uniform, but also a clear example of what a student-athlete epitomizes. On the court, DuPont was a dominant player, twice earning All-American and C-USA Player of the Year awards, while etching her name throughout the school and conference record books.

Off the court, DuPont was named an Academic All-American by CoSIDA three times, including a first team honor in 2004. A member of UC's esteemed Legion of Excellence, DuPont has carried a GPA near 4.0 for her entire career. She has also been involved in the community, serving as co-president of CPAWS, the Athletic Department's service organization. She has also been involved regularly with her local church.

DePaul



Senior guard **Jenni Dant** is a three-time All-Conference USA honoree and will finish her DePaul career among all-time leaders in various categories. She has been the cornerstone of DePaul's resurgence as one of the nation's top women's basketball programs.

As a freshman, Dant picked up All-Freshman honors from C-USA followed by second team all-league honors as a sophomore. A year ago, she led DePaul to the program's second straight 20-win season and second consecutive NCAA Tournament appearance and picked up third team league honors.

Dant will finish her career ranked among the all-time leaders in games played, scoring, three-pointers, free throws, assists and steals. She recently became just the third student-athlete in DePaul's 31-season history to make at least 400 career free throws.

East Carolina



Diane Parker is a two-time C-USA Female Swimmer of the Year, winning the honor in 2003 and 2004. She is coming off a trip to the NCAA Championships after becoming the first Pirate swimmer since 1991 to qualify for the NCAAs.

Parker, ECU's Most Outstanding Swimmer honoree from 2002-2004, has also earned the league's Swimmer of the Week Award seven times and C-USA Rookie of the Year honors in 2002. She has captured six individual titles in conference championship competition and currently holds six ECU varsity records and two C-USA records.

This season, Parker broke a James Madison pool record in the 100 butterfly while also qualifying for the finals in the 100 breaststroke and 100 butterfly at the U.S. Open.

She has already made the provisional cut for the 2005 NCAA Championships.

Houston



Krystal Ward is a four-time Conference USA champion and All-American in the heptathlon. The senior won the heptathlon at the 2002 C-USA Championship before earning All-American honors as a freshman with a sixth place finish at the NCAA Outdoors.

She also was the 2003 C-USA indoor high jump champion and finished second in the league's first pentathlon competition despite competing with a stress fracture in her foot. After sitting out the outdoor season with an injury, she returned to win the C-USA pentathlon championship and was the conference champion in the heptathlon for the second time in her career. She also qualified for the NCAA Championships.

Ward also has earned numerous academic honors in her career,

including being inducted into the National Society of Collegiate Scholars in 2003, the National Collegiate Scholars, the National Golden Key Honor Society and the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society in 2004. She served as the chair of Omicron Delta Kappa, was a member of Phi-Eta Lambda in 2002, and named to the National Deans List.

An exercise science and pre-med major at Houston, she is a member of Allied Health Professions Society, Mu-Delta Pre-Med Society and the Wesley Foundation. She also sings in the Lilly Grove Young Adult Choir and serves as a mentor in the F.U.U.S.A. Rescue and Lilly Grove Tutorial Ministry. Last fall, Ward served on the Homecoming Court and was a Deans List finalist.

Louisville



Aja Sherman made an immediate impact when she began her softball career at U of L. She became a mainstay at first base and then during her second season, saw successful playing time as a pitcher.

After being named to the 2004 Conference USA preseason all-league team as a first baseman, she earned All-C-USA first team honors as a pitcher. Sherman emerged as the team-leader with a 1.40 ERA and 162 strikeouts in 150.0 innings, notching three no-hitters including the school's first perfect game. Her 16-7 record was instrumental in the Cardinals' record-breaking 41-19 season and first NCAA regional appearance in the five-year history of the program.

This season, Sherman was chosen 2005 Preseason C-USA Pitcher of the Year.

The photography major has also been diligent in the classroom, being named to the C-USA Commissioner's List and the Dean's List and Athletic Director's honor roll at Louisville. Sherman volunteers with the Boys and Girls Club of Louisville and has spent numerous hours building and repairing houses with Habitat for Humanity.

Marquette



Marquette junior midfielder **Julie Thompson** is an example of how to get it done in the classroom and on the field. Thompson was one of Marquette's leaders during the 2004 soccer season as she started every match for the Golden Eagles.

Thompson scored four goals and added five assists for Marquette in 2004, leading the team to a 12-8-1 record - its ninth straight 10-win season. The junior was named first team All-Conference USA in recognition for her play.

Thompson's achievements have not been limited to the soccer field. Thompson was named to the NSCAA/adidas Scholar All-

North/Central Regional second team. She is also a regular recipient of C-USA academic awards. Thompson currently has a 3.65 GPA, demonstrating her ability to excel in the classroom, as well as on the field.

Marquette head coach Markus Roeders said, "She sets a strong example on and off the field for her teammates and will do the same for our team next season as a senior."

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Memphis



Senior **Lisa-Marie Hyman** is a three-time C-USA triple jump champion and the only Tiger athlete to ever win three C-USA titles in one event. Claiming league outdoor titles in 2002 and 2003 and an indoor championship in 2003, she narrowly missed a fourth indoor title in 2004, placing second.

Off the track, the 2003 Academic All-American was a member of the "Tiger Academic 30," Memphis' top-30 student-athletes. She has earned her bachelor's degree in mathematics, graduating with honors and was named one of six recipients of Postgraduate Scholarships presented by C-USA.

In the community, Hyman is also a model citizen, participating in such activities as Race for the Cure, MIFA Meals on Wheels, Shelby Farms Make a Difference Day, her church choir and middle school tutoring programs.

Saint Louis



Senior **Jamie Perry** closed out her collegiate soccer career as dramatically as she began it four years ago. As a freshman, she tied the school record for points and goals in a season. Perry is now the all-time points and goals leader in school history. With 104 career points, she is just the fifth player in C-USA to eclipse the 100-point plateau.

A four-time All-Conference and three-time NSCAA All-Region performer, Perry is also a regular member of the C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll and named ESPN Academic All-America and NSCAA Scholar All-America in 2004. Last spring, she was named C-USA Women's Soccer Scholar Athlete of the Year.

Perry is also involved in community service with the Special Needs Soccer Association (SPENSA), the Billiken Caravan program and the Marine Corp Toys for Tots Tournament.

Southern Miss



Senior **Jennifer Keefe**, a three-year letterwinner in golf, has been an inspiration on and off the field.

In the spring of 2004, Keefe took medalist honors in the NIU Snowbird Classic and led the Golden Eagles in scoring average (77.46). She finished in a tie for seventh at the C-USA Golf Championship, earning all-conference honors. She finished the fall season with a team-best 77.8 stroke average, shooting a career-best round of 70 at the Beacon Woods Invitational.

The international business major was selected for the NGCA All-American Scholar Team. She also earned CoSIDA Academic All-District second team honors and the C-USA Academic Medal.

As a member of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, Keefe has been involved in numerous community service projects.

TCU



Senior **Sandora Irvin** has made her mark as a student-athlete by compiling many "firsts" at TCU. She is the first All-American in Horned Frog women's basketball history, the first men's or women's basketball player at TCU to reach 1,000 rebounds and recorded the first triple-double in the women's program. She is TCU's all-time career leader in nine statistical categories.

Irvin is an All-Conference performer, earning Defensive Player of the Year honors in 2003 and 2004. She is the league's all-time leader in blocked shots and rebounds. Irvin set an NCAA record this season for blocks in a game and became the national career leader in blocked shots on Feb. 5.

A preseason candidate for several prestigious national awards, Irvin has helped lead the TCU women's program to new heights.

Tulane



Junior **Jenny Kuhn** is a two-time Conference USA Player of the Year in women's tennis who has led Tulane to back-to-back C-USA Championships in her first two years with the Green Wave. Last spring, she helped the Wave post an amazing 27-2 record and advance to the NCAA Tournament Round of 16 for the first time in school history.

As a freshman, Kuhn earned All-America honors in doubles along with partner Julie Smekodub after the duo won the ITA National Indoor Championship and advanced to the Round of 16 at the NCAA Championships. It was the first national title ever won by Tulane in women's tennis. She was also the league's Freshman of the Year that season.

Ranked No. 81 in singles in the latest ITA rankings, Kuhn has more than 100 combined singles and doubles wins in just two seasons. Behind Kuhn, one of six current Tulane players ranked by the ITA since last spring, the Green Wave opened the 2005 spring dual match season No. 9 in the nation, the highest ranking in school history, and was invited to participate in the 2005 ITA Team Indoor Championship for the first time ever.

A double major in accounting and marketing, Kuhn is a two-time ITA Scholar-Athlete who earned the Commissioner's Academic Medal in 2003 and posted a perfect 4.0 semester again this fall. She has participated in numerous community service activities, including the "Read to Kids" program at a local elementary school.

UAB



Katie Billue is a senior forward on the UAB women's basketball team. After coming off the bench for the past three seasons, she has emerged as both a starter and team leader in first-year head coach Audra Smith's system.

Billue is a double major in Operations Management (Business) and Psychology with a 4.0 GPA. She is a member of Beta Gamma Sigma, Psi Chi, Phi Kappa Phi, Golden Key International and Who's Who Among Students in American Universities & Colleges. Additionally, Billue was awarded the \$1,000 2004 Beta Gamma Sigma Scholarship and chosen to represent UAB's School of Business at the semi-annual Beta Gamma Sigma National Leadership Conference.

She has been named to the C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll three times and the UAB President's Honor Roll for nine semesters.

Billue has also volunteered her time to 16 different charities during her Blazer career, including serving as treasurer on UAB's Student Athletic Advisory Committee (SAAC) for 2004-05. She has participated in the R.O.A.R. student-athlete mentor program since arriving at UAB in 2001. Billue has also been responsible for the women's basketball team's effort to prepare meals for individuals and families at the local Ronald McDonald House. She also volunteers for Birmingham's Meals on Wheels program.

USF



It all started as a community service project for a leadership practicum class this past summer. What began as a way to improve themselves during the collegiate experience turned into a bonafide lesson in life for USF women's basketball players' Alana Tanksley and **Sharon Cambridge**.

The two have established, and run, the Create-A-Smile Foundation, which benefits underprivileged children in the Tampa Bay area.

Cambridge, a starting center for the Bulls, and Tanksley hosted the children at the foundation's first major event at Busch Gardens in Tampa and plan to have several other events during the course of the year. The pair also visit the children at Metropolitan

Ministries and talk about their lives and different issues that they may be facing.

"When we first started visiting these children they thought we really had a lot of money and were so well off ... they thought we were rich," said Cambridge. "What we really wanted them to know is that we were just like them and that everyone has problems. That they are not alone. It really gives them an opportunity to talk."

The Bulls' Most Improved Player honoree last season, the junior returned to the lineup in January after a foot injury hampered her early this season.

Top Moments in C-USA Women's Athletics History

Conference USA is celebrating its 10th anniversary during the 2004-05 season. The league is commemorating this milestone throughout the year with a multimedia campaign celebrating the past, present and future of the league. Several activities have been planned to capture the history of C-USA and promote the student-athletes' achievements in all 19 conference-sponsored sports. Last August, 10 of the top moments in C-USA history were featured on ConferenceUSA.com. Five of those included women's athletics and are listed below, along with several others from conference archives.



December 13, 1996 Louisville is the first C-USA volleyball team to reach the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Championship.

March 9, 1997 Conference USA sends a record five teams to the NCAA Women's Basketball Championship (DePaul, Louisville, Marquette, Memphis and Tulane).

May 1997 Kim Williams of DePaul was selected by the Utah Starzz in the fourth round of the inaugural WNBA Draft, becoming the first C-USA women's basketball player to be drafted.

November 15, 1997 Cincinnati becomes the first women's soccer team to represent C-USA at the NCAA Championship.

December 11, 1998 Louisville makes its second trip to the Sweet 16 in the NCAA Volleyball Championship.

March 20, 1999 Memphis is the first women's basketball team to represent C-USA at the WNIT Final Four.

November 1999 C-USA champion Hanne Lyngstad of Tulane records the highest finish ever by a C-USA cross country student-athlete, finishing fourth at the NCAA Championship.

March 19, 2000 UAB becomes the first women's basketball team in C-USA to reach the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament.

May 2000 Jenny Adams of Houston wins the first national championship for C-USA in women's outdoor track in the long jump. Houston records the highest finish for a C-USA team at that event, placing eighth.

June 2000 Southern Miss pitcher Courtney Blades is named the Honda National Softball Player of the Year.

March 2001 Jenny Adams of Houston becomes the first female indoor track national champion for C-USA after winning the long jump at the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championship.

February 2002 Vonetta Jeffery becomes the first former C-USA student-athlete (and current C-USA coach) to win an Olympic gold medal, after winning the two-person bobsled event.

November 2002 C-USA sends three teams to the NCAA Women's Soccer Tournament.

March 2003 Yulia Pakhalina becomes the first C-USA diver to earn three NCAA titles on the three-meter board and two crowns on one-meter.

March 2003

DePaul becomes the first C-USA softball team to defeat the nation's top-ranked team, beating No. 1 and eventual national champion UCLA.

April 2003

C-USA sends a record four teams to the NCAA Women's Golf Championship.

March 15, 2004

Houston becomes the first C-USA women's basketball team to be ranked in the Top 10, finishing No. 9 in the AP poll.

April 2004

Houston's Joe Curl becomes the first C-USA women's basketball coach to earn National Coach of the Year accolades.

April 2004

Houston's Chandi Jones becomes the first C-USA women's basketball player to earn consensus All-America honors. In achieving that status, she became the first player in league history to be named to the Kodak All-America team.

May 16, 2004

Conference USA sends a record five teams to the NCAA Softball Championship. DePaul, Houston, Louisville, Southern Miss and USF each earn bids.

May 16, 2004

Tulane becomes the first C-USA women's tennis team to reach the round of 16 at the NCAA Championship.

December 4, 2004

Louisville earned its third Sweet 16 appearance in the NCAA Volleyball Championship.

November 27, 2004

TCU defeats No. 3 Georgia, marking the highest-ranked opponent that a C-USA team has defeated in women's basketball.

February 5, 2005

TCU's Sandora Irvin becomes the NCAA's all-time leader in blocked shots in women's basketball.



Jenny Adams
Houston



Sandora Irvin
TCU



Courtney Blades
Southern Miss