



THE BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME/WBCA



Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, Women's Basketball Coaches Association Narrow Watch List for 2018 Lisa Leslie Award

Top Ten Female Collegiate Centers Named as Candidates

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SPRINGFIELD, MASS. – The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame and the Women's Basketball Coaches Association announced today the 10 candidates for the 2018 Lisa Leslie Award. Named after the three-time All-American, 1994 National Player of the Year and a 2015 inductee of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, the annual award in its inaugural year recognizes the top centers in women's NCAA Division I college basketball.

"Before Lisa Leslie became one of the most recognizable faces of the WNBA, she was a collegiate center unlike any other," said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Basketball Hall of Fame. "Her impact was immediate as the best freshman in the collegiate game and she continued to develop her skills each season. The ten women recognized as candidates for the award bearing Lisa's name should be both proud and honored."

The Selection Committee for the Lisa Leslie Award is composed of top women's college basketball personnel including media members, head coaches, sports information directors and Hall of Famers. In March, five finalists will be presented to Ms. Leslie and the Hall of Fame's selection committee. Fans will also have the opportunity to vote for their favorite finalists to determine the Naismith Starting 5 at www.hoophallawards.com.

The winner of the 2018 Lisa Leslie Center Award will be announced during ESPN2's telecast of the national semifinal games in the 2018 NCAA Women's Final Four in Columbus, Ohio on Friday, March 30. Additional awards being presented include the Nancy Lieberman Point Guard Award, the Ann Meyers Drysdale Shooting Guard Award, the Cheryl Miller Small Forward Award and the Katrina McClain Power Forward Award, as well as the Wade Trophy, the sport's oldest and most prestigious national player of the year award which is presented annually by the WBCA's community of coaches to the best player in college women's basketball.

For more information on the 2018 Lisa Leslie Award, visit www.hoophallawards.com.

2018 Lisa Leslie Award Candidates

Kalani Brown	Baylor
Azura Stevens	Connecticut
Megan Gustafson	Iowa
Hallie Thome	Michigan
Teaira McCowan	Mississippi St.
Kaylee Jensen	Oklahoma St.
Marie Gulich	Oregon St.
A'ja Wilson	South Carolina
Mercedes Russell	Tennessee
Monique Billings	UCLA

Players can play their way onto and off of the list at any point in the 2017-18 season

About Lisa Leslie: Widely regarded as the best player in the country during her senior year of high school, Leslie decided to play basketball close to home at University of Southern California. While at USC, she set Pac-10 records for scoring, rebounding and blocked shots, earning All-Pac-10 honors each of her four seasons. In 1991, she was named national freshman of the year and went on to earn All-American Honors the following three seasons. In her senior season, she won multiple national player of the year awards, including the Naismith College Player of the Year and the WBCA Player of the Year. In the summer of 1997, the Women's National Basketball Association was launched and with it, Lisa Leslie became a household name. The Los Angeles Sparks landed the hometown star, who would go on to help them win two world championships. As an eight-time All-Star and three-time MVP, Leslie became the face of the WNBA. In 2002, she became the first player to dunk in a WNBA game. Leslie retired as the all-time leading rebounder in WNBA history and was an eight-time First Team All-WNBA performer. Internationally, Leslie won four gold medals in Olympic competition. Since retiring from professional play, Leslie has worked as a sports commentator and analyst for several networks, while exploring fashion modeling and acting as well.

About the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame: Located in Springfield, Massachusetts, the city where basketball was invented, the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame promotes and preserves the game of basketball at every level – professional, collegiate and high school, for both men and women on the global stage.

For more information:

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About the WBCA: Founded in 1981, the Women's Basketball Coaches Association is the professional association for coaches of women's and girls' basketball at all levels of competition. The WBCA offers educational resources that coaches need to help make themselves better leaders, teachers and mentors to their players; provides opportunities for coaches to connect with peers in the profession; serves as the unifying voice of a diverse community of coaches to those organizations that control the game; and celebrates those coaches, players and other individuals who excel each year and contribute to the advancement of the sport.

For more information:

Visit us online: www.WBCA.org

... on Facebook: www/facebook.com/WBCA1981/

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