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Best Practices in Marketing Women's College Basketball

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BEST PRACTICES IN MARKETING WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

By

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ABSTRACT
BEST PRACTICES IN MARKETING WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Alex Yoh, B.S.

Marquette University, 2014

Many women's college basketball programs struggle in the area of fan attendance. The purpose of this research study is to identify potential contributing factors to this problem. A review of the existing literature helped procure several possibilities including possible failures to locate appropriate target audiences, misguided reliance on winning games to produce fans, distracted fans, lack of star players in the sport, and the inability to produce a sense of belonging among fans.

In order to substantiate and/or detail these potential issues, a group of women's basketball coaches, administrators and team marketers was interviewed. Many of the researched issues were corroborated, while other relevant concepts were revealed through speaking with the respondents. In summary, most respondents emphasized the notion that not enough is being done in women's basketball to incentivize fans attending and returning to games.

This report used a considerable amount of the data and input from the Marquette University's Women's Basketball team, with the hope that the findings specifically benefit the program in the near future.

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Alex Yoh, B.S.

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Best Practices in Marketing Women's College Basketball

Introduction

Several administrators and officials of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) have previously completed reports on the state of women's college basketball. These reports have proven to be comprehensive in identifying both problems and solutions to factors such as attendance, television appearances, and marketing practices. Most recently, in June 2013, Big East Conference Commissioner Val Ackerman completed a *Division I Women's Basketball White Paper* prepared for the NCAA. The findings of Ms. Ackerman served, in part, to influence this report, which is tailored towards specifically aiding those responsible for marketing and promoting women's basketball at Marquette University.

History and background

The game of basketball was invented in 1891. Approximately one year later, the rules and style of play were adapted into a women's version of the sport (Smith College, 2011). The NCAA would hold its first men's basketball championship in 1939, an early antecedent to today's March Madness. Women's basketball, though, did not get its own NCAA championship tournament until 1982, nearly a half-century later (Nixon, 2012, p. 6). These are just a few realities that help illustrate how women's basketball has been playing catch-up for some time.

However, the discrepancies are much deeper, and go beyond the value of time. At Marquette University, for example, the campus newspaper (citing the Department of Education's Equity in Athletics Data Analysis) reported the men's basketball team made over \$5 million in profit in 2010-2011. The report indicated the Marquette Women's Basketball team was the only other varsity sport at the institution to generate a profit, but procured just over \$118,000 in the

same year (Zahn, 2012). Of course, these dollar amounts have a strong correlation with attendance figures at Marquette home games.

Marquette men's basketball drew an average of 15,033 fans in the year 2013, which ranked 15th in all of Division I NCAA men's basketball. The University of Kentucky (23,099), Syracuse University (22,439), and the University of Louisville (21,571) ranked first, second, and third, respectively (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2013). On the women's side, the University of Tennessee led the NCAA in attendance in the 2012-2013 season, with an average of 11,390 fans. No other program's numbers reached five figures.

In fact, there are currently 345 NCAA Division I Women's Basketball teams recognized in the national weekly attendance record (see Appendix A for a complete and detailed list). Of these teams, only 17 programs drew an average attendance of 5,000 or more during the 2012-2013 season. Seventy-four programs had an average attendance of between 1,000 and 2,000, including Marquette, which brought about 1,600 people to the Al McGuire Center for its home games (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2013).

In the game of women's college basketball, there exists an upper echelon of teams that have enjoyed long periods of virtually unimpeded success. This limited group of programs such as the University of Tennessee, the University of Connecticut, University of Notre Dame, Stanford University, and others is made up of perennial winners that often perform well above their competition. Still, the remaining pool of schools often benefits from the success of these select few.

For example, Marquette women's basketball enjoyed some of its largest crowds for games when it hosted college basketball's elite. In February 2009, Marquette was defeated by the visiting Connecticut Huskies, but played before a sell-out crowd of over 4,000 fans. The

next season, Marquette hosted Connecticut again and drew 3,010 fans, the largest crowd of the 2009-2010 season. The Connecticut games in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 season also drew very well, with 3,609 and 2,684 fans, respectively. Connecticut was ranked first in the nation for each of the meetings at Marquette from 2009-2011 and was ranked fourth in 2012. Additionally, in February 2013, Notre Dame (ranked second in the nation) visited the Al McGuire Center, as did 2,733 fans. This was the second largest crowd of the season (see Appendix B for Marquette attendance versus Connecticut and Notre Dame).

While a handful of games against these premier opponents may help raise a few robust crowds, empty seats are still far too common. Incredibly, 205 or roughly 60 percent of NCAA Division I Women's Basketball programs drew an average attendance of less than 1,000 fans per game in 2012-2013 (NCAA, 2013).

The demand for seats may also correlate to the demand to watch from home. During the 2012-2013 season, the Marquette men's basketball team saw 24 of its 30 regular season games, or 80 percent, broadcast on television to a national audience. Marquette's women's team, by comparison, had just four of their games broadcast on national television.

Even the select women's basketball games that are broadcast nationally may not have the positive effect that marketers desire. In her report to the NCAA, Big East Conference Commissioner Val Ackerman (2013) notes that "there is concern that many [televised] games reflect badly on the women's college basketball brand due to either lopsided results, overly physical play or scarcity of fans in the stands" (p. 29). Still, women's college basketball administrators still categorize television presence as a key aspect of increasing the game's popularity. The Big East Conference, for example, included several accomplishments related to broadcasting as part of its annual league memorandum. Here, the Big East listed its NCAA-

leading “31 appearances on ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPNU” as a positive factor, in addition to the conference owning “four of the top five highest-rated women’s basketball games of the season across the ESPN family” (Donehew, 2011, p. 1). Decent television ratings may not hurt the sport, but it is unlikely they are doing much to physically fill seats at women’s basketball games.

These comparisons, particularly at Marquette University, are not illustrated here to suggest that the women’s following, standing, and status must equal the men’s counterpart. To be sure, it needs to be understood that different circumstances exist that make total equality in attendance, fan interest, and followership nearly impossible. Still, the aforementioned discrepancies do suggest that promoters, marketers, and advocates of women’s basketball have plenty of work to do in building a wider audience.

Conceptual Framework

Target audiences

Pedersen, Miloch, & Laucella (2007) describe segmentation as the most important aspect of targeting potential consumers through the use and understanding of “demographics, psychographics, lifestyle, geographic region, and frequency of product usage” (p. 245). It truly is the “million dollar question” for women’s basketball marketers: *Who is most willing to buy tickets to our games, and how can we most efficiently reach them?*

In her report, Ackerman (2013) concludes that there are five major characteristics of the demographic profile for NCAA Division I Women’s Basketball fans. She notes the following:

- “Females outnumber males 56% to 44%”
- “53% are 50 and older (of this number, 30% are 60 and older)”
- “71% are Caucasian”

- “53% have completed college or graduate school”
- “70% earn less than \$75,000/year” (p. 6)

Generally, determining target audiences in any industry is a meticulous process. The Marquette University Athletic Department has mainly relied on what it has learned from past ticket buyers. The chief demographic for potential buyers of women's basketball tickets at Marquette includes senior citizens, females, and families with children. Marquette targets families more heavily than other potential audiences. The department's secondary target is within the on-campus community. Students tend to be ideal fans because of their proximity to the arena and their emotional ties to the university. Student attendance at Marquette Women's Basketball game is generally low, however. In terms of the Milwaukee community, Marquette markets towards more of the suburban areas, which again, is justified by data from past ticket sales (G. Cronkite, personal communication, February 2014).

Win, still lose

Typically in sports, winning games sells tickets. The best National Basketball Association (NBA) teams have the biggest crowds. National Football League (NFL) stadiums generally sell out for the league's elite. The aforementioned Kentucky, Syracuse, and Louisville men's basketball teams, which lead collegiate basketball in plentiful crowds, are perennial winners. Unfortunately for women's basketball programs, the link between success and attendance is not nearly as strong.

At Marquette University, for example, the relationship between the women's basketball win-loss record and fans in the seats appears to be rather unconnected. The team's highest average attendance per game (1,827) occurred during the 2008-2009 campaign when the win-loss record was 17-16. The next highest attendance average (1,710) came in 2011-2012 season,

when the team's record was 14-17. Interestingly, the Marquette Women's basketball team had its most outstanding season in recent years in 2010-2011, capturing a 24-9 record. That season, however, marked one of the program's lowest average attendance figures (1,545) in a five-year span (see Appendix C for Marquette attendance between 2008-2013).

The variables that are accurate indicators in the number of ticket sales are, indeed, difficult to predict. Mueller (2013) conducted a study to determine which factors sell tickets for Marquette men's basketball games. This study found the following as major factors in sales:

- Conference games prove to be the best predictor of tickets sold
- Games held on Saturday draw well
- Games played against a rival are popular
- Marquette's previous year's winning percentage influences attendance (p. 42)

It is unknown if these indicators relate similarly to ticket sales of Marquette women's basketball games.

In the women's game, even programs that have consistently appeared in the national spotlight are rarely, if ever, recording sell-outs. Duke University Women's Basketball owns a 174-35 record over the course of the past six seasons, including four consecutive trips to the NCAA Quarterfinals. Though the program ranks within the top 20 for attendance in women's basketball, the Blue Devils still attract less than 5,000 fans per game and well under half of the capacity of their home arena, Cameron Indoor Stadium (Duke Athletics, 2014).

The reality for marketers of women's college basketball is that there are many empty seats in arenas across the country, though the reason is neither singular nor simple. Ackerman (2013) opines that women's basketball promoters "have focused more on competitive success than on business strategies designed to boost awareness of [the sport], attract fans, and generate

meaningful revenue streams” (pg. 28). The reliance on winning games might be categorized as a temporary solution at best. That achievement certainly does not work alone in women's basketball. Marketers must identify additional formulas in order to have a chance of attracting an audience.

Elusive fans

One of the basic concepts of any form of marketing is that there must be an understanding that the consumer needs good reason to devote his or her time, attention, and money to what the marketer is trying to sell. This transaction has become increasingly difficult in the modern era as options increase and technology improves. Rein, Kotler, and Shields (2006) describe the modern market for a sports fan as a place that is extremely cluttered and fast moving, where information needs to be highly compressed and condensed in order to be processed and accepted (p. 42).

Additionally, the advent of new sports, leagues, and teams has diluted the focus of the typical fan. Each of the major American professional sports has expanded to nearly 30 teams in the past few decades. Newer sports like lacrosse and soccer have emerged onto the scene. For these reasons, the era between 1990 and the present has seen a steep decline in the amount of “one sport fans” (Rein et al, 2006, p. 54). Simply put, there are too many alternatives for a fan to have many strong favorites and, therefore, singular devotion has suffered.

Since there are so many options that contend for a sports fan's attention, marketers are pressured to make meaningful connections with their audiences whenever possible. There are tactics that work to effectively combat the increasingly cluttered marketplace.

Harvard Management Communication (2001) outlines several ways consumers can be engaged and remain interested in a product. First, it is important to target people who are willing

to opt-in or “actively request information” about a product or service (pg. 2). Second, once those interested parties are engaged, there is a suggestion that marketers work hard to “keep their promises,” “keep it fresh,” and “create a dialogue” (p. 2). This dialogue is arguably the most imperative aspect of building an audience for an entity like women’s basketball. Without the knowledge of what potential fans want out of their purchase of game tickets, marketers will have little idea of what procedures will produce repeat customers and new attendees.

Starless nights

Promoters have found other ways in dealing with the issue of breaking through the clutter. Rein et al (2006) suggest one of the ways marketers can focus the attention of a fan is through the use of “star power” (p. 54). Indeed, super star athletes help sell tickets. Fans follow, root for, relate to, and even revere many of these individuals. It is logical, then, that industries that are peppered with mainstream, recognizable stars such as professional football, professional basketball, major league baseball, and men’s college basketball are perceivably performing well in the areas of fan engagement and attendance. On the other hand, popular stars do not generally power entities such as women’s professional and collegiate basketball, and, hence, the apparent struggle.

As a case example, the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) has recently employed several over-arching promotional schemes to try to boost the number of fans interested in going to the track. NASCAR experienced an 8.5 percent drop in attendance for its races across the nation between 2009 and 2011 (Long, 2012). This drop may be attributed to several factors. The casual fan might not be attracted to an individual driver enough on their own for “star power” to be significant in boosting attendance. To combat this possibility, NASCAR, has begun to design elaborate ways to highlight their drivers through personal stories,

creative multimedia advertisements, and other interactive tactics (Del Rey & Zmuda, 2012).

Since a professional driver may not have the natural star status of someone like LeBron James of the NBA, NASCAR marketers are doing all they can to build up their drivers as stars with which fans can connect.

Although women's college basketball may not have many individually recognized star players, it is once again important to consider that there is an upper echelon of elite teams within the sport. In essence, Connecticut, Tennessee, Notre Dame, and some others, are stars of the sport themselves. And while these teams help attendance numbers in both their home arenas and those they travel to, their star power does more to help them individually than it does for the sport as a whole. If only 10 to 20 teams have star status, that leaves over 300 other Division I women's college basketball programs, theoretically, who do not.

At Marquette University, it is also worth considering that due to the recent realignment of the Big East Conference and subsequent inception of The American Athletic Conference, the Golden Eagles no longer play the likes of Connecticut and Notre Dame during conference play (a list of current and former members of the Big East Conference is listed in Appendix D). Recall that these games produced the largest crowds of Marquette's season, simply due to the caliber of the visiting opponent. Therefore, finding ways to draw fans by more innovative and creative ways has become even more imperative.

Sense of inclusion

Aside from experiencing an association with their favorite athletes, fans need to feel like a legitimate part of a sports organization in order to devote their resources to it. Fan engagement strategists must be constantly inventive in this regard. Season ticket holders, for example, rightfully have the expectation that their extra commitment should include additional incentives.

The NBA's Philadelphia 76ers, for example, allow their Platinum Season Ticket Holders all-access membership to a luxury dinner club for every home game, as well as free tours of the 76ers locker room, and full-time membership to the team's business alliance (Philadelphia 76ers, 2014).

Incentives allow fans to feel a sense of belonging—that they are members of a privileged, distinguished group. Currently, Marquette University Athletics lists the following benefits for purchasing season tickets for women's basketball games:

- Better seating options than with a mini-plan or single game ticket
- Priority to purchase extra single game tickets before the general public
- Priority to purchase tickets to the Big East and NCAA tournaments
- Manage your account online: print or email your tickets from home

These benefits focus mostly on the idea of “priority” and probably do not promote a sense of inclusion with the team.

On the other hand, Solomon and Freeman (2012) outlined the benefits of committing to focusing on fan appreciation tactics in minor league baseball: “We constantly try to provide free gifts in terms of merchandise, discounted food and beverages, or other benefits that will be appreciated by the loyal fans. These advertised thank-yous remind our fans that the ball clubs value their season-long support” (p. 97).

Furthermore, Solomon and Freeman (2012) stated the importance of these baseball teams connecting with as much of the local community as possible. A list of examples included teams aiding in high school fundraisers, team versus community kickball games, and elementary school tutoring sessions with ballplayers (p. 94).

Connective medium

There is evidence to suggest that effective use of social media platforms may help fans connect to teams. Moyer (2011) gathered evidence to suggest that the Milwaukee Brewers team Facebook page was a very effective tool for fans to connect and identify with the team and its individual players. At the collegiate level, it is not uncommon for each varsity sport to operate its own social media platforms. This lets teams develop and share meaningful insights into their programs and allows them to tailor content appropriately.

There have been efforts to be more connective at the conference level as well. In 2010, The Big East Conference highlighted several communications efforts designed to make “women’s basketball coaches and programs available to the media and accessible to the fan base” (p. 22). Of these promotions were a series of scheduled video teleconferences with head coaches. These interviews were to be conducted and broadcast three times per year: pre-conference season, mid-conference season, and before the championship tournament. Fans had the opportunity to access interviews and behind-the-scenes content from their favorite teams at no monetary cost. Whether or not this content effectively resonated with fans and produced a sense of inclusion and subsequent desire to participate and/or purchase tickets is unknown.

Social media outlets, like Facebook, offer more than their versatility. Marketing professionals consistently feel “the immense pressure marketers are under to deliver more value for less money” (LaPointe, 2012). Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others are free to use, easy to operate, and have the ability to reach many people quickly. Considering, again, the world of advertising clutter that currently exists, the viability of social media as a tool is significant.

Marquette University Women's Basketball, in fact, is performing well in terms of followership of its major social media outlets. The team ranks near the top of its competitors in the Big East Conference, as indicated in the following tables.

Table 1

Facebook Likes: Big East Conference Women's Basketball as of February 15, 2014

Rank	Team	Likes
1	Marquette University	1,660
2	Creighton University	1,379
3	Butler University	781
4	Xavier University	776
5	Seton Hall University	411
6	Providence College	338
7	Villanova University	292
8	Georgetown University	276
9	St. John's University	200
10	DePaul University*	-

**DePaul University does not have a Facebook page specific to their women's basketball team*

Table 2

Twitter Followers: Big East Conference Women's Basketball as of February 15, 2014

Rank	Team	Likes
1	St. John's University (@StJohnsWBB)	1,801
2	Marquette University (@MarquetteWBB)	1,598
3	Creighton University (@CreightonWBB)	1,282
4	Butler University (@ButlerWBB)	841
5	Georgetown University (@GeorgetownWBB)	587
6	Villanova University (@novawbasketball)	585
7	Seton Hall University (@SHUWBB)	551
8	Xavier University (@Xavier_WBB)	364
9	Providence College (@ProvidenceWBB)	349
10	DePaul University (@DepaulWBBHoops)	276

Methodology

The conceptual framework for this report was collected to underscore some of the potential key concepts in designing a *best practices* approach to marketing the game of women's basketball. These concepts offer some of the basic notions to consider as possible aids in marketing the game. Perspective from real-world industry professionals was used in substantiating these perceptions. Ackerman (2013) also collected input from basketball administrators, coaches, and marketing representatives, but the participants' identities remained anonymous in her final report for unknown reasons.

Design

In all, 12 professionals were approached about the possibility of contributing to this study. Eleven subjects successfully completed the interview process. Individuals with extensive experience in both the field of women's basketball and sports marketing contributed.

Eight out of the 11 interviewees were either women's basketball coaches or administrators. This group included: Bill Gould, Head Women's Basketball Coach at Emerson College; Mickie DeMoss, Assistant Coach of the WNBA'S Indiana Fever; Theresa Wenzel, Assistant Director of Athletics and Senior Woman Administrator at Georgia Tech University; Amber Cox, Associate Commissioner for Women's Basketball of the Big East Conference; Terri Mitchell, Head Coach at Marquette University; Danielle Donehew, Associate Commissioner for Women's Basketball at the American Athletic Conference; Beth Bass, Chief Executive Officer of the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA); and Billie Moore, former Head Coach at the University of California, Los Angeles and Team USA.

The remaining three interviewees were current sports marketing professionals. This group included: Nick Popplewell, Assistant Athletics Director for Marketing and Branding at the University of Wyoming; Leah Gross, Assistant Marketing Director for Louisiana State University Athletics; and Greg Cronkite, Assistant Director of Marketing for Marquette University Athletics.

The eleven people interviewed were selected based on their accessibility and differing perspectives. A wide range of experiences and opinions was needed to confirm the permeation of attendance issues in women's college basketball. Several professionals were chosen at the suggestion of Mitchell.

All but three of the interviews were completed over the telephone. Two interviews were completed face to face. One interview was conducted via email. All interviews, with the exception of the email correspondence, were recorded with an audio device and later transcribed. It must be noted that the medium by which the interviews were conducted had no influence on the responses to the questions asked to subjects. The most important aspect of the interview process was the consistency of the questions. The method of asking the questions was professionally structured but also invited the interviewees to be comfortable in their replies and generally conversational. The length of each interview varied, depending on the depth of the subject's answers. The shortest interview lasted 15 minutes, while the longest reached 42 minutes. Most interviews took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Each subject was asked the same eight questions pertaining to the study:

1. Please state your name, occupation, and service time in your current job.
2. Since its inception, has growth in the sport of women's basketball been sufficient?
3. In your estimation, what is the current status of women's basketball in terms of fan participation? Attendance? Exposure?
4. Are there specific ways you believe collegiate women's basketball programs can improve their fan participation and attendance? If so, what are some of these methods?
5. Is the marketing approach different when attempting to promote teams with annual success and/or high exposure (ex. Tennessee, Baylor, Connecticut)?
6. Today, there is much competition for people's time, attention and money. How does one market a product in a depleted, diluted, or congested market?
7. How do you believe target audiences for women's basketball are determined? How

are they reached?

8. What is the influence of social media in marketing women's basketball?

The second and third questions were designed as a way for the subject to establish their personal opinion on the current state of women's college basketball and whether or not they believed more needs to be done to grow the sport and expand its audience.

The fourth and sixth questions helped determine specific perspectives and ideas each subject had regarding practices that could improve the current issues in women's college basketball.

The fifth question was included to help gain perspective on the perceived lack of parity in women's college basketball and how it influences attendance and fan participation.

The seventh question was designed as a way for the subject to include their input on whom, specifically, marketers should target as new followers of women's basketball.

The eighth and final question served to provide a perspective on the influence of social media.

All subjects answered each question without reservation and seemed to share the information to the best of their individual abilities, based on their experiences and expertise. Each subject verbally agreed to allow their perspective and identities to be included in the findings of this report.

Findings

Once again, it is important to note that the initial research component, or conceptual framework, of this study revealed *potentially* viable concepts in marketing women's basketball. The opinions and experiences of the professionals interviewed served to help confirm or deny and/or detail these discoveries. The subjects' responses could best be categorized into three

components: the current state of women's college basketball, ideas on the best practices in targeting an audience, and ideas on the best ways to engage and secure existing fans.

Current state. All subjects agreed that major progress has been made in the game of women's basketball. Cox cited the general development of women's athletics and the influence of leaders such as Billie Jean King, Ann Meyers, and Cheryl Miller as positive factors of growth.

"We have a pro women's basketball league that has been around for 18 years," said Cox. "Women's soccer, lacrosse and softball participation numbers are growing at a record pace and more opportunities than ever exist for girls to get athletic scholarships and play professionally, internationally and in the United States."

Student-athlete participation is one aspect that has clearly improved in the sport since its inception. Other factors have not grown so steadily. "From a media perspective, they haven't been increasingly covering women's basketball as much as other sports. In comparison, the media attention has not been there" said Cronkite.

Bass cited another poignant issue with the broadcasting of women's basketball games. Promoters of the game constantly want exposure for their respective programs and schools. Nationally televised games are thought to be the most beneficial and efficient way to accomplish this. However, Bass observed, "If we want to grow an arena attendance, sometimes it's the exact opposite of how we grow TV and radio." She explained that many marketers fight to have their games be put on television, only to have arena attendance suffer. Television audiences then see hundreds of empty seats in these arenas, leading to poor messaging about the state of interest in women's basketball. "We must be careful about wanting so much exposure," said Bass. "We may end up being exposed."

Respondents tended to agree that many programs are challenged with attracting students to games. Gould recalled his tenure at Boston College, when his team visited the University of Connecticut each year. “[That game] would be absolutely packed. You couldn’t get a ticket. It would be sold out. But if you looked at it,” said Gould, “there were hardly every any students. It was mainly families... young families or older people [in the stands].”

Some subjects cited Title IX as a motivating factor in cultivating aspects of women’s basketball. Title IX is a law that calls for gender equity in all academic institutions or programs that receive federal funding. “I think [women’s basketball] grew with Title IX in terms of opportunity, not necessarily with things like attendance. I went to Duquesne at a time when we just went Division I and there really wasn’t a commitment to the program, attendance, or quality of coaches,” said Terri Mitchell. Mitchell added that women’s basketball administrators were instead most concerned with compliance of Title IX and other standards, rather than angling the game as a form of entertainment during her tenure as a player in the 1980s.

Moore also exemplified Title IX as one of several happenings that helped ignite the popularity of women’s basketball. “One of the things that had a big impact was having the Olympics in Montreal [in 1987] in which the women won the silver [medal]” said Moore. She also added the advent of the WNBA and the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, at which the women’s team won the gold medal, to the list of things that brought positive attention and helped the women’s game. While these events hold high importance, Moore noted that they all happened at least 20 years ago. She added that very little has happened or been done recently to replace the momentum provided by these events.

Targeting fans. “You’re going to need to get people who like to watch basketball. People want to be able to relate,” said Gould. He added that many “everyday” people relate to

the fundamental nature of the women's basketball game. "Women's basketball is known to have players who can shoot, who can pass, who set good screens, who make good cuts" he said. Bass agreed: "I think you hear this all the time. Women's basketball is very similar to how a lot of people played it growing up, especially men who now have daughters. They say 'that's how I played,'" she said. "[The game] is more fundamentally sound, [there's] more sportsmanship, more teamwork."

"Who are people that are potentially interested in [women's basketball]? [The answer] is just looking at the fans that are coming in the door right now," said Popplewell. He added that for his program at the University of Wyoming, the specific target groups are families, seniors, and faculty and staff of the school. "You try to promote it as much as you can to the general public, but that's not really our focus," said Popplewell. "We want people to be aware, but really our bread and butter are with those [specific] demographics. Otherwise, you're spending a lot of resources with little return."

Localization. "You've got to start out by saying how can I sell this program? How can I get out in my particular community and get people in the stands and keep them there? Communities are different" said DeMoss, "There's no blanket answers to that. You can't say what I did in Lexington will work in Milwaukee."

Wenzel agreed that marketing focuses must reflect location. "Policies or initiatives do not work at every school and I think that people need to focus on what works in their respective areas," she said.

Other respondents agreed that targeting audiences should be unique to each school or program. "It is valuable to look at what is in the five-mile radius of your campus. Then look at what is within a 10-mile radius of your campus. Then list all the things that are in those two

categories,” said Donehew. She added that many schools would find themselves close to schools, senior citizen centers, hospitals, community clubs, and other entities. “You can do a lot of farming [in these zones]” said Donehew. “I’m not saying not to market to people who are more than 10 miles away, but I am saying you should *own* what is 10 miles in.”

Moore referenced the philosophy of former University of Tennessee Head Coach Pat Summitt: “As a team, you go to everything on campus. You go to every organization, every group on campus. You go to every kind of community club or any senior home, whatever it may be,” she said. “People are going to support you that make a connection with you. That’s how you get fans.”

Incentive. “There are a lot of programs that cater to their [potential] season ticket holders and make them feel special,” said Mitchell. “They want to know if they [commit], what are they going to get in return?” Mitchell cited access to players as a leading incentive for these fans, including autograph sessions and players visiting fans in the stands after games. “Access is so important. I think putting something in their hands and giving them a reason to come back is important,” she said. “I think we exist in a society of incentives. We are also a society of access. If we focus on those two things I think we can grow our attendance.”

The idea of incentive was consistent among most respondents. “Women’s basketball is not featured on mainstream media, so it isn’t top of mind,” said Cox. “We have to find the right targets and have conversations with them about the benefits of becoming season ticket holders.”

“We must try to balance our marketing and try to offer incentives,” said Gross. “[At LSU] we’ll do discounted tickets for one sport if you show up [for another]. We just try to give incentives to go to more games and to take in our brand.”

Sharing. “I say this all the time. I want to go to full arenas,” said Mitchell. “I want our players to play in front of thousands of people.” Moore agreed with this sentiment. “I would much rather go to someone’s facility on the road and play in a packed arena, than play at home with no one there,” she said. Mitchell added that full arenas are more of a possibility when cooperation is present. “I think we need to share more ideas [from program to program],” said Mitchell. “We all know about Public School Day promotions, when we invite elementary school classes to one of our games. That started with one person’s idea and it caught fire. The WNBA now does it. You are guaranteed thousands of little kids and their parents and teachers for that game. What are other ideas like that? We can generate fans if we share amongst each other.”

Bass also put value on the idea of sharing. “I do think we all need to have overall similar messaging. What is women’s basketball? Why do you like women’s basketball?” she said. “We all need to have the same battle cry or [highlight] the same attributes that we all talk about.”

Value. There is debate among marketers and administrators about the idea of giving women’s basketball tickets away for free as a means of getting fans in the arena. Several respondents were wary of this concept. “There’s a value to our game. There’s a value to see our women play. I think it is a big misstep if a school ever gives away free tickets because it sends the community the wrong message,” said Donehew. “It gives the message that they have received a free ticket in the past, so they won’t go again until they receive another free ticket.” Instead, Donehew suggested programs should instead frame the idea of complimentary tickets as those “purchased by a donor,” for example, as to not devalue the act of attending a women’s basketball game.

Cronkite also cautioned the use of free tickets. “There is a battle between selling tickets, increasing revenue and attaching value to the product against using the ‘easy’ way of getting fans

in the stands and giving them a free ticket,” said Cronkite. “Many coaches want to [use free tickets] to get fans in the stands. I completely understand that perspective... but what’s the value of women’s basketball if we are not going to be charging people to watch it?”

Engaging and securing fans. In the world of sports marketing, targeting fans is only half of the challenge. Consistent attendance with the potential for growth can only happen if fans repeatedly return.

Inclusion. “What you try to do is keep your athletic department on the forefront of people’s minds, even through the wins and the loses, you want them to feel proud and feel like they’re part of the team,” said Popplewell.

Donehew suggested pride starts with connection. “[Fans] appreciate knowing the student-athletes and knowing their stories... and feeling like they understand what makes them tick,” she said. “I think that is the quickest way for a community to know that they want to respond and they want to support this team: because this team is special and this team gives to the community... so the community wants to give back to them.”

Fans might further connect with a team if they feel an affinity with the coaching staff. “I also believe coaches must play a key role. They are often the face of the program,” said Cox. “A great public relations plan is to get head coaches into the community talking about women’s basketball and converting fans.”

Entertainment. Once fans are in the arena, several respondents agreed that it is of utmost importance to give them a good experience. “We need to make sure we are doing the most we can entertainment-wise at our games,” said Gross. “We do have a video board, which helps [in delivering] a lot of our promotions. We want fans to feel like they want to come back again.”

DeMoss agreed that win or lose, fans need to have fun at the arena. “We’ve got to put a product on the floor that people are going to enjoy watching and enjoy the atmosphere of the game, even if the team is not playing well that night,” she said. “What do you have going on at time-outs? What do you have going on at halftime? All of those promotional things are huge because [fans] can still feel entertained even if the team is not playing well that particular night.”

Wenzel gave an example of catering to a specific target at Georgia Tech. “We made Sunday [games] a very fun, family interactive experience,” she said. “We had inflatables, face painters, poster designers, and we have our cheerleaders and our dance team to help the little kids. We have a DJ... t-shirt tosses, a ‘dance cam’ [during the game].”

“I’ve heard [at some schools] when there’s inclement weather, they shuttle people from the dorms to the arena or they make sure when people are buying their tickets that they get to come inside and not stand out in the weather,” said Bass. “Those little things—being more personable, being accessible, making it easy to do the right thing [all contribute].”

Goal setting. “We include goals in our marketing plan. We try and set specific goals so we can look back and check what might be attainable,” said Gross. She added that it is critical to set goals for specific focuses, including things like social media followers and group ticket sale numbers. Popplewell agreed. “You’ve got to put some goals out there, realistic goals. Saying we’re going to sell out every game is not realistic, but can we sell out one or two,” he said. “If we look at the schedule and we time everything right and we have a little bit of success, we might be able to do that.”

Consistency in setting goals and devising messages may be crucial. “Just know when you are [creating your marketing plan], you’re not only affecting this year and this season, you’re affecting the buying expectation of your fans for three, five, or seven years,” said

Donehew. "You've got to have a good model in your head in your planning of what you are trying to build so that you create an expectation that your fans can accept."

Conclusion

Application and future consideration

The perspectives and data collected from the research and interviews conducted only partially identify some of the issues associated with generally poor attendance in women's college basketball. Still, the findings of this report are relevant to beginning to solve this problem. The Marquette University Athletics in particular may benefit from some of the applicable concepts that follow.

Social media. Several interview respondents gave credence to the idea that social media is an effective tool in reaching and engaging the women's basketball fan base. There was not enough meaningful detail on the subject collected to include in the methodology's findings.

It can be inferred, though, that a basketball program likely has to do more than simply count their social media participants in order to measure the medium's effectiveness. In order to give meaning to the number of Likes and Followers of a team's social media account, further research must be done. Fans who have "opted in" to participate in a team's social media platforms might be administered a survey such as the *Sport Spectator Identification Scale*. This model was created and made popular by Wann and Branscombe (1993). This may be an effective tool for Marquette Athletics to gauge the real power of their team accounts. An example could resemble the following survey model.

Season ticket holders. As identified in the conceptual framework, Marquette Athletics currently advertises only basic incentives of becoming a season ticket holder for the school's women's basketball team.

It would be beneficial for the department to survey current season ticket holders to simply ask them what they want in return for their loyalty. As indicated by the information collected for this report, many season ticket holders surveyed will likely request different ways to feel a sense of inclusion with the team. Examples might include 'Chalk Talk' sessions, where Marquette coaches share basketball insight with fans or an invitation to the post-season team banquet.

Replacing stars. Marquette Women's Basketball lost two of its highest crowd-attracting opponents when Connecticut and Notre Dame left the Big East Conference following the 2012-2013 basketball season (see Appendix B for attendance figures for Marquette versus Notre Dame and Connecticut from 2009-2013). Despite the significant loss of these popular opponents, little has been done to help replace the attendance void. A comparison between the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 Marquette Women's Basketball promotional schedules revealed no significant changes.

Marquette may need to devise one or two brand new promotional events that occur over the course of a season. As the aforementioned research suggests, these potential new events will have to be carefully planned to reflect the preferences of target audiences and be executed in an engaging fashion. Expanded research from this report may help identify potential options to consider for these future promotions.

Goals. Currently, the Marquette Athletics Department has its own marketing plan with an attached list of goals. The Marquette Women's Basketball staff has its own agenda that pertains to communications efforts, which includes aspects of community relations, team/fan

interaction, social media, and recruiting. While the basketball staff and marketing staff do cooperate frequently with one another, it may be possible to streamline their collective efforts. It could be beneficial, for example, to have one detailed marketing communications plan focused on all components of messaging and branding for the team. Consider that coaches recruit student athletes. Basketball operations staffs schedule community service opportunities. Team marketers sell tickets to games. All three groups, though, are essentially doing the same thing: branding the team and making it more attractive to outside groups.

Atmosphere. Of the 10 women's basketball teams that make up the Big East Conference, seven home arenas have video boards as a component of their Jumbotron or scoreboard. Marquette's Al McGuire Center is one of the three arenas that does not have a video board. Additionally, the lighting system in place at the Al McGuire Center does not allow lights to be shut on and off quickly. This prohibits the possibility of "going dark" for starting lineup introductions, which is an exciting way to stimulate fans before each game begins.

A video board and better lighting system would improve the atmosphere in the arena. Video promotions and contests help engage fans during the game, for example. The addition of these amenities is certainly not easy, as their installation would involve a great deal of structural and financial effort. Still, it must be a future consideration.

Research limitations

Several research limitations exist. First, only 12 participants were pursued for the purpose of informative interviews. While the eleven subjects who participated provided important substantiation of the data collected in the conceptual framework, it is still a relatively small sample. The study could be expanded to include more perspectives and ideas. Second, an author with somewhat of bias constructed this research paper. The author has worked in

women's basketball marketing for several years. Finally, some of the respondents elaborated extensively on other aspects not included in the final report due to structural constraints of the paper.

Concluding remarks

Many different directions might be taken in order to expand this research. One interesting route may be to test the potential viability of the marketing model for minor league baseball teams in the women's basketball field. Since minor league baseball games are widely known for their high level of fan experience practices and for their positive ballpark atmosphere, it is a logical model to explore.

Whatever the route, this subject deserves far more attention. Women's college basketball has come too far for attendance numbers to now be so low. Marketers of the game have an obligation to the young women who commit so much to playing the sport. Marketers, coaches, and administrators alike must be continual students—they must learn from the mistakes and failures of their own agendas and from those of other schools and programs. They must listen and learn from their loyal fans, however few or many they may have.

The overarching theme produced by this research paper has proved to be the idea of “incentive.” In order to fill seats in women's basketball arenas across the nation, there must be incentive for fans to attend games, to return to games, and to commit supporting programs long-term.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

Office of Research Compliance
Schroeder Complex, 102
P.O. Box 1881
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201-1881

P 414.288.7570
F 414.288.6201
W marquette.edu/researchcompliance

December 5, 2013

Mr. Alex Yoh
Professional Studies

Dear Mr. Yoh:

Thank you for submitting your protocol number HR-2723 titled, "*Best Practices of Marketing Women's Basketball*" to the Office of Research Compliance (ORC). On December 3, 2013, a determination of exempt status was made under the following category or categories:

Category #2: Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Observations

You may proceed with your research. Your protocol has been granted exempt status as submitted. Documents submitted with your protocol (consent, flyer, etc.) may be used but do not receive formal IRB approval.

Minor changes to the project may be emailed to orc@mu.edu. Major changes, or changes affecting participant risk, require submission of a Protocol Amendment Form which can be found on the ORC web site.

Please submit an IRB Final Report Form once this research project is complete. Submitting this form allows the ORC to close your file.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Amanda J. Ahndt, RN, MS, MSN, CIM, CIP
IRB Manager

cc: Dr. Christopher Okunseri, IRB Chair
Dr. Paul McInerney
Ms. Sherri Lex, Graduate School
Ms. Emily Hernandez, Professional Studies

Appendix B: NCAA Women's Basketball Attendance**NCAA Weekly attendance (Unedited) Through Games of 04/09/13**

Name	Home Games	Total Attendance	Average Attendance
Tennessee	18	205,027	11,390
Iowa St.	15	149,557	9,970
Louisville	18	168,442	9,358
Baylor	17	155,713	9,160
Notre Dame	14	125,699	8,979
Connecticut	20	179,542	8,977
Purdue	13	110,689	8,515
New Mexico	17	109,651	6,450
Texas Tech	18	115,517	6,418
Michigan St.	15	95,282	6,352
Kentucky	17	104,447	6,144
Oklahoma	17	102,061	6,004
Gonzaga	17	96,523	5,678
Texas A&M	19	105,556	5,556
Penn St.	14	76,050	5,432
Nebraska	17	89,123	5,243
Maryland	16	81,821	5,114
Duke	16	79,328	4,958
Iowa	18	82,200	4,567
Stanford	15	64,259	4,284
Middle Tenn.	14	58,988	4,213
Delaware	17	69,375	4,081
Wisconsin	15	60,822	4,055
Vanderbilt	14	56,309	4,022
Toledo	17	68,201	4,012
South Carolina	16	63,224	3,952
Texas	15	58,327	3,888
LSU	18	69,438	3,858
Virginia	15	56,467	3,764
Ohio St.	17	60,832	3,578
Wyoming	15	51,018	3,401
Kansas St.	19	62,397	3,284
Minnesota	19	62,259	3,277
Colorado	18	58,695	3,261
Georgia	16	50,091	3,131
Montana	17	51,817	3,048
DePaul	17	48,453	2,850

Kansas	17	47,886	2,817
Hampton	11	30,185	2,744
Dayton	12	32,863	2,739
UALR	16	43,500	2,719
UTEP	17	46,034	2,708
West Virginia	15	39,962	2,664
Missouri St.	14	36,479	2,606
Florida St.	15	39,070	2,605
Fresno St.	14	36,407	2,601
Indiana St.	15	38,885	2,592
North Carolina	18	46,437	2,580
Chattanooga	13	33,156	2,550
Old Dominion	17	42,562	2,504
California	16	39,691	2,481
Green Bay	16	39,371	2,461
TCU	18	43,785	2,433
Louisiana Tech	14	33,260	2,376
Drake	14	31,704	2,265
Oklahoma St.	16	36,094	2,256
Wichita St.	15	33,615	2,241
Binghamton	12	26,527	2,211
UT Martin	15	32,873	2,192
James Madison	20	43,146	2,157
Indiana	17	36,662	2,157
Auburn	19	39,867	2,098
Rutgers	15	31,256	2,084
Virginia Tech	18	37,181	2,066
South Dakota St.	14	28,399	2,029
Michigan	17	34,160	2,009
UCLA	15	29,864	1,991
East Tenn. St.	11	21,845	1,986
FGCU	15	29,192	1,946
Arkansas	18	34,794	1,933
Illinois	18	34,673	1,926
North Carolina St.	17	32,688	1,923
Washington	16	30,742	1,921
Marist	13	24,894	1,915
South Ala.	14	25,569	1,826
Arkansas St.	15	27,068	1,805
Stephen F. Austin	13	23,456	1,804
Hartford	16	28,647	1,790

Montana St.	14	23,019	1,644
Marquette	16	26,121	1,633
Pittsburgh	17	27,563	1,621
Mississippi Val.	12	19,408	1,617
Illinois St.	17	27,453	1,615
Arizona St.	15	23,821	1,588
Oregon	16	25,204	1,575
Bowling Green	19	29,529	1,554
Hawaii	19	28,780	1,515
East Carolina	15	22,527	1,502
St. John's (NY)	15	22,349	1,490
Youngstown St.	15	22,071	1,471
Missouri	19	27,929	1,470
North Dakota	14	20,564	1,469
Temple	13	19,067	1,467
Miami (FL)	18	26,334	1,463
South Fla.	16	23,299	1,456
Navy	16	23,263	1,454
Tennessee Tech	15	21,788	1,453
Arizona	13	18,791	1,445
Charlotte	18	25,516	1,418
Georgia Tech	15	20,207	1,347
Albany (NY)	14	18,808	1,343
Oral Roberts	12	16,108	1,342
UNI	14	18,688	1,335
Mississippi St.	17	22,384	1,317
Liberty	16	20,516	1,282
Buffalo	15	19,222	1,281
Northern Ky.	13	16,574	1,275
Western Ky.	15	18,707	1,247
Central Mich.	13	16,141	1,242
Maine	10	12,251	1,225
Tulane	17	20,749	1,221
UMES	13	15,712	1,209
Oregon St.	15	17,965	1,198
Florida	16	19,035	1,190
Northwestern	16	19,013	1,188
UNLV	16	18,878	1,180
SIU Edwardsville	13	15,149	1,165
Alabama	15	17,178	1,145
Cincinnati	15	17,033	1,136

Canisius	14	15,795	1,128
Ark.-Pine Bluff	13	14,616	1,124
Colorado St.	15	16,757	1,117
Duquesne	15	16,719	1,115
Princeton	13	14,499	1,115
Idaho St.	13	14,342	1,103
Creighton	13	14,256	1,097
South Dakota	14	15,313	1,094
Drexel	16	17,482	1,093
Mercer	17	17,877	1,052
Central Conn. St.	14	14,601	1,043
Memphis	16	16,663	1,041
Norfolk St.	12	12,381	1,032
Campbell	13	13,365	1,028
Texas St.	14	14,372	1,027
Penn	16	16,402	1,025
Southern Miss.	15	15,335	1,022
Prairie View	10	10,165	1,017
Central Ark.	13	13,218	1,017
Southern U.	13	13,168	1,013
Xavier	16	16,190	1,012
Lehigh	15	14,814	988
Washington St.	13	12,817	986
New Mexico St.	16	15,710	982
Rhode Island	15	14,605	974
A&M-Corpus Chris	14	13,574	970
Clemson	15	14,511	967
Southern Utah	14	13,461	962
Iona	12	11,542	962
Texas Southern	11	10,507	955
UC Davis	14	13,337	953
Jackson St.	10	9,499	950
Villanova	12	11,364	947
Saint Joseph's	16	15,154	947
Army	15	13,985	932
Grambling	12	11,137	928
North Florida	13	12,044	926
Boston College	15	13,889	926
UNC Wilmington	13	11,883	914
Western Mich.	12	10,889	907
Ole Miss	15	13,546	903

Northwestern St.	13	11,677	898
Wake Forest	16	14,342	896
Nevada	14	12,497	893
Utah	18	16,044	891
Vermont	12	10,579	882
McNeese St.	12	10,489	874
North Texas	13	11,274	867
Sam Houston St.	11	9,483	862
Holy Cross	15	12,872	858
Southern California	17	14,451	850
Boise St.	15	12,524	835
Morehead St.	14	11,635	831
Ball St.	15	11,966	798
Murray St.	16	12,666	792
North Dakota St.	14	11,078	791
Evansville	12	9,456	788
N.C. Central	11	8,636	785
Bradley	13	10,132	779
UC Santa Barbara	14	10,875	777
Hofstra	14	10,786	770
Alabama A&M	12	9,234	770
Weber St.	13	9,781	752
Georgetown	14	10,512	751
Lipscomb	13	9,747	750
Eastern Ill.	14	10,438	746
Stetson	15	11,122	741
San Diego St.	16	11,744	734
Lamar	16	11,599	725
SMU	18	13,035	724
Siena	14	10,104	722
Austin Peay	13	9,380	722
Delaware St.	11	7,927	721
Ohio	14	10,073	720
Quinnipiac	15	10,661	711
Long Beach St.	18	12,801	711
Alabama St.	12	8,510	709
Harvard	11	7,773	707
Milwaukee	11	7,769	706
Butler	13	9,097	700
Portland St.	14	9,608	686
Southeast Mo. St.	13	8,911	685

William & Mary	12	8,071	673
UMBC	14	9,390	671
Dartmouth	13	8,696	669
Coastal Caro.	16	10,619	664
Syracuse	14	9,269	662
George Washington	13	8,552	658
BYU	17	11,165	657
Tennessee St.	11	7,201	655
Marshall	13	8,461	651
Bethune-Cookman	13	8,454	650
High Point	12	7,798	650
Oakland	16	10,338	646
Western Ill.	14	9,014	644
Morgan St.	14	8,982	642
Seton Hall	16	10,256	641
George Mason	15	9,494	633
Akron	14	8,841	632
Presbyterian	12	7,578	632
UMKC	13	8,077	621
Utah St.	13	8,053	619
Alcorn	11	6,780	616
Santa Clara	14	8,613	615
Lafayette	13	7,976	614
Saint Francis (PA)	13	7,973	613
Fordham	17	10,252	603
Miami (OH)	15	8,988	599
UTSA	16	9,586	599
N.C. A&T	14	8,369	598
VCU	14	8,321	594
Providence	14	8,254	590
Richmond	14	8,235	588
Southeastern La.	12	6,894	575
Tulsa	13	7,399	569
Radford	12	6,817	568
Wright St.	15	8,473	565
Belmont	13	7,208	554
Ga. Southern	12	6,632	553
St. Bonaventure	12	6,630	553
UNC Asheville	15	8,258	551
Pacific	17	9,315	548
Monmouth	14	7,543	539

Winthrop	12	6,473	539
Wagner	11	5,923	538
Florida A&M	12	6,420	535
Ill.-Chicago	15	7,884	526
Valparaiso	14	7,311	522
Denver	14	7,280	520
Georgia St.	17	8,827	519
Troy	14	7,248	518
Kent St.	14	7,207	515
Houston	16	8,188	512
San Diego	17	8,682	511
Rice	16	8,114	507
Appalachian St.	12	6,014	501
Samford	13	6,461	497
Rider	13	6,460	497
Bucknell	14	6,881	492
Jacksonville	15	7,376	492
San Jose St.	15	7,237	482
Cal Poly	16	7,645	478
Fairfield	15	7,136	476
Eastern Wash.	13	6,147	473
Seattle	15	7,077	472
Longwood	11	5,166	470
Elon	16	7,521	470
UAB	15	7,012	467
New Orleans	12	5,587	466
Cal St. Northridge	14	6,498	464
Saint Louis	13	6,027	464
Northern Ill.	11	5,090	463
UNC Greensboro	16	7,368	461
Kennesaw St.	12	5,514	460
Towson	15	6,893	460
UCF	14	6,440	460
Cornell	14	6,418	458
Col. Of Charleston	13	5,948	458
Massachusetts	14	6,325	452
Portland	13	5,879	452
La.-Lafayette	15	6,760	451
Columbia	13	5,718	440
St. Mary's (CA)	14	6,162	440
Northern Colo.	14	6,166	440

Texas-Arlington	14	6,145	439
LIU Brooklyn	14	6,133	438
Saint Peter's	15	6,485	432
Boston U.	14	5,999	429
Furman	14	5,985	428
FIU	18	7,620	423
Tex.-Pan American	11	4,646	422
Eastern Mich.	16	6,704	419
Niagara	14	5,840	417
Nicholls St.	11	4,577	416
Loyola Maryland	13	5,366	413
Savannah St.	12	4,948	412
IPFW	15	6,171	411
South Carolina St.	12	4,871	406
Sacred Heart	16	6,470	404
Idaho	12	4,818	402
Davidson	11	4,412	401
San Francisco	15	5,950	397
Northeastern	14	5,497	393
Jacksonville St.	12	4,700	392
Southern Ill.	13	5,093	392
USC Upstate	14	5,413	387
Bryant	14	5,410	386
Utah Valley	12	4,615	385
Sacramento St.	13	4,862	374
IUPUI	16	5,916	370
New Hampshire	12	4,402	367
Western Caro.	14	5,111	365
Gardner-Webb	16	5,822	364
UC Irvine	13	4,715	363
Robert Morris	12	4,343	362
Fairleigh Dickinson	11	3,900	355
Neb. Omaha	17	6,023	354
NJIT	14	4,865	348
Detroit	17	5,919	348
CSU Bakersfield	12	4,128	344
La Salle	13	4,463	343
American	13	4,429	341
Chicago St.	14	4,678	334
UC Riverside	16	5,349	334
Loyola Marymount	14	4,593	328

Cleveland St.	15	4,875	325
Fla. Atlantic	12	3,885	324
Northern Ariz.	14	4,472	319
Houston Baptist	17	5,431	319
Yale	13	4,024	310
Loyola Chicago	15	4,648	310
Air Force	14	4,338	310
Coppin St.	13	4,012	309
Howard	12	3,708	309
Brown	13	3,962	305
Wofford	12	3,595	300
Pepperdine	15	4,456	297
Stony Brook	15	4,055	270
Cal St. Fullerton	14	3,741	267
Colgate	13	3,425	263
La.-Monroe	14	3,626	259
Manhattan	16	3,969	248
Eastern Ky.	14	3,430	245
Mt. St. Mary's	14	3,351	239
Charleston So.	15	3,344	223
St. Francis Brooklyn	13	2,088	161

Note. Retrieved from the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Copyright 2013.

Appendix C: Marquette Women's Basketball vs. Connecticut and Notre Dame**Al McGuire Center Attendance Figures 2009-2013**

Date	Opponent/Rank	Attendance
February 17, 2013	Notre Dame / 2	2733
January 12, 2013	Connecticut / 2	2684
February 25, 2012	Connecticut / 4	3609
January 5, 2011	Notre Dame / 12	1300
January 13, 2010	Connecticut / 1	3010
February 7, 2009	Connecticut / 1	4000
January 13, 2009	Notre Dame / 10	1850

Note. Retrieved from the Marquette University Department of Athletics.

Appendix D: Marquette Attendance Figures 2008-2013

Basketball season	Attendance (per game)	Revenue (per ticket sold)
2012-2013	1633	<i>unknown</i>
2011-2012	1710	\$3.00
2010-2011	1545	\$2.93
2009-2010	1495	\$3.17
2008-2009	1827	\$2.80

Note. Retrieved from the Marquette University Department of Athletics.

**Appendix E: Big East Full Membership 2006-2013
and 2013-present (after realignment)**

Big East 2006-2013	Big East 2013-present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Cincinnati • University of Connecticut • DePaul University • Georgetown University • University of Louisville • Marquette University • University of Pittsburgh • Providence College • Rutgers University • Seton Hall University • University of South Florida • St. John's University • Syracuse University • Villanova University • West Virginia University * 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butler University • Creighton University • DePaul University • Georgetown University • Marquette University • Providence College • Seton Hall University • St. John's University • Villanova University • Xavier University

Note. West Virginia University exited the conference in 2012

Appendix F: Participant Biographies



Beth Bass is the Chief Executive Officer of the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA). She was named to her post in 2001. Bass manages and oversees all operations for the WBCA, including its cooperative efforts with the NCAA, WNBA, and USA Basketball. The WBCA has more than 4,000 members nationally. Bass formerly was a marketing executive with Nike and Converse, Inc.

Note. This information taken from WBCA.org



Amber Cox is the Associate Commissioner for Women's Basketball of the Big East Conference. Her duties include marketing and branding and the management of the conference tournament. Cox previously worked for the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury, where she spent time as Chief Operating Officer and later as President.

Note. This information taken from ESPN.go.com



Greg Cronkite is currently in his third season as Assistant Director of Marketing at Marquette University Athletics. His primary responsibilities include marketing and promoting women's basketball. Cronkite was previously a Marketing Assistant at Marquette and also worked in athletics marketing at Western Michigan University.

Note. This information taken from GoMarquette.com



Mickie DeMoss is an Assistant Coach for the Indiana Fever of the WNBA under Head Coach Lin Dunn and is entering her third season. She previously was an assistant coach and associate head coach at the University of Tennessee under Lady Vols' Head Coach Pat Summitt. DeMoss has held head coaching positions at the University of Kentucky and the University of Florida.

Note. This information taken from WNBA.com



Danielle Donehew is the Associate Commissioner for Women's Basketball at the American Athletic Conference. Donehew oversees all aspects of American Athletic Conference women's basketball, including television, scheduling, branding and messaging, and management of the conference championship. She previously worked for the WNBA and for the University of Tennessee.

Note. This information taken from TheAmerican.org



Bill Gould is the Head Coach of Emerson College Women's Basketball. He was named to this position in 2007. Prior to joining the Lions, Gould spent two years as an assistant at Bentley College. He also spent eight seasons as an assistant at Boston College, where he was part of six 20-win seasons and six NCAA tournament appearances.

Note. This information taken from emersonlions.com



Leah Gross is the Assistant Director of Marketing at Louisiana State University Athletics. She is instrumental in the marketing and promotion of the women's basketball team. Prior to LSU, Gross spent two years in the marketing department at Marquette University. She has also worked for Auburn University and the MLB's Tampa Bay Rays.

Note. This information taken from GoMarquette.com



Terri Mitchell is the Head Coach of Marquette University Women's Basketball. She was named to her position in 1996. Mitchell spent the previous 5 seasons as an assistant coach at Marquette and began her career in in 1989 as a graduate assistant at Arizona State. Coach Mitchell was a four-year letter winner and co-captain at Duquesne University.

Note. This information taken from GoMarquette.com



Billie Moore compiled a 436-196 record in 24 years of coaching at the college level. She spent 16 seasons as the head coach of UCLA and eight years as the head coach at Cal State Fullerton. She became the first USA Olympic Women's Basketball Coach in 1976, and earned the silver medal in that year's Olympics in Montreal. Moore was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1999.

Note. This information taken from HoopHall.com



Nick Popplewell is the Assistant Athletics Director for Marketing and Branding at the University of Wyoming. He oversees all marketing efforts for the department and individual sports. Popplewell was previously the Director of Marketing at the University of Idaho.

Note. This information taken from LinkedIn.com



Theresa Wenzel is the Assistant Director of Athletics and Senior Woman Administrator at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Wenzel oversees the sports of women's basketball, volleyball, softball, golf, men's and women's tennis, men's and women's track and cross country, and men's and women's swimming. She previously held administrative and coaching positions at Siena College and Canisius College.

Note. This information taken from RamblinWreck.com