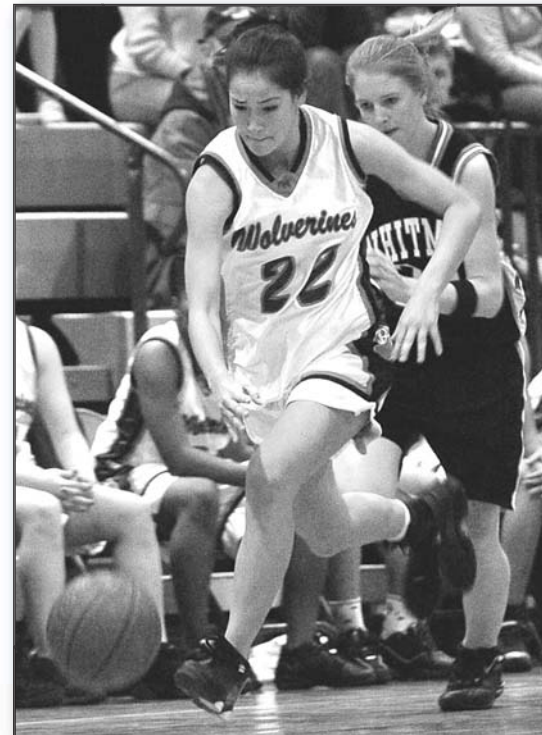
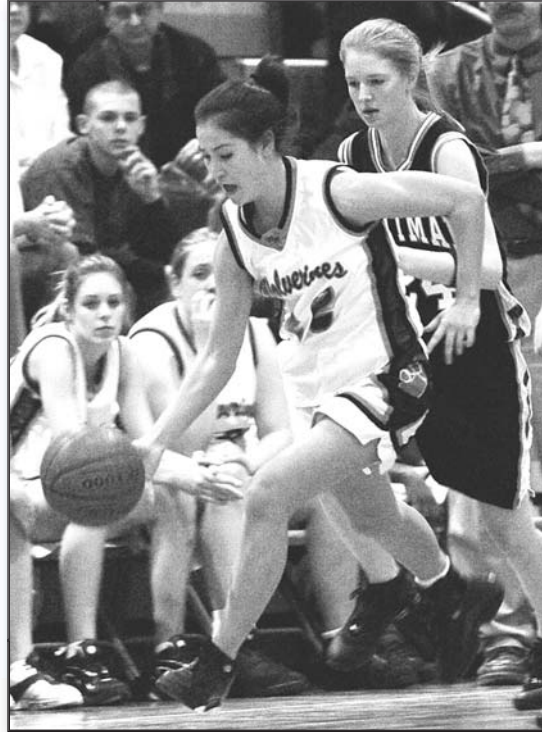
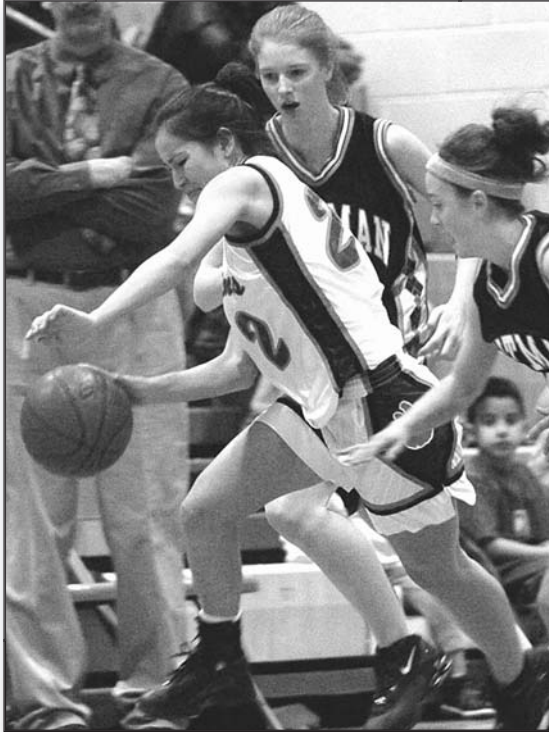


PART ONE
Coaching Philosophy



CHAPTER 1
The Popularity and Growth
of Girls' Basketball



Chapter 1: Popularity and Growth of Girls' Basketball

Surprise! Basketball isn't just for boys anymore. Thirty years ago, it was rare for schools to field a girls' basketball team, and it was even more unusual for there to be girls' basketball leagues outside of school...but a lot has changed since then. The game is now enormously popular among girls and women of all ages, from elementary school age up to professionals. What's more, it's no longer *just* a winter sport; now, with the advent of organized fall, spring, and summer leagues, basketball is a year-round activity.

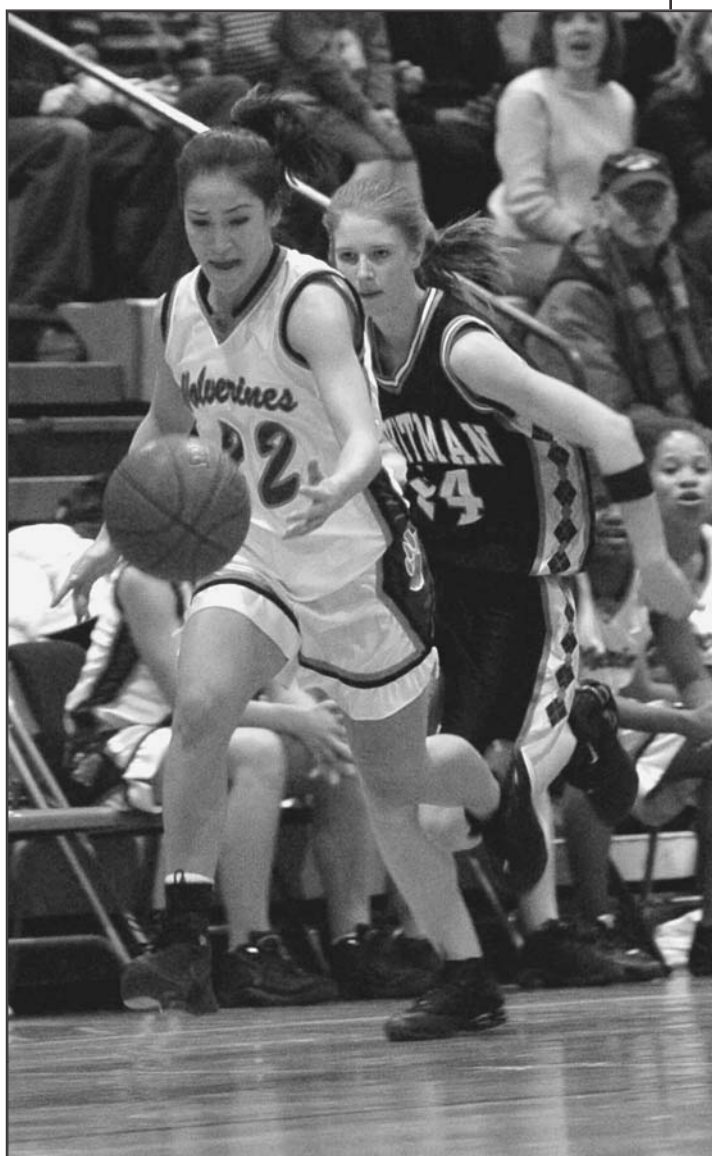
Millions of girls play basketball each year on high school, middle school, elementary school, recreational, and AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) teams combined. Basketball is the most popular girls' high school sport; more than 500,000 young women participate across the country in a given year. It is played at almost 20,000 high schools in all 50 states and in the District of Columbia. That's a lot of athletic young women!

TEAMS AND LEAGUES AVAILABLE

SCHOOL TEAMS

According to a National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) 2002–2003 Athletics Participation Survey, the top ten most popular high school girls' sports programs (in order of participation) are:

1. Basketball
2. Outdoor Track and Field
3. Volleyball
4. Fast-Pitch Softball
5. Soccer
6. Cross-Country
7. Tennis
8. Swimming and Diving
9. Competitive Spirit Squads
10. Golf



The Complete Guide to Girls' Basketball



Most schools have varsity and junior varsity teams, and some have a freshman squad as well. A typical high school team plays about 20 games during the winter season, beginning in early December and ending in late February (and possibly later if they qualify for the playoffs). In some localities, varsity and junior varsity coaches are prohibited from coaching their school teams outside of certain specified dates in the winter months. Volunteer parents or other individuals coach during the spring, summer, and fall seasons, thus enabling the girls to play varsity or junior varsity-level basketball with their school teammates practically all year long.

The growth of girls' basketball has been proportional to the overall growth in high school girls' sports. According to the NFHS survey, for the schools responding, participation by girls in all high school sports increased from 1.3 million in the school year ending in 1974 to 2.8 million in the school year ending in 2003. (By comparison, boys' participation was slightly above 4 million in the 1974 school year and slightly below 4 million in the 2003 school year.) Equally as

impressive is the fact that the number of girls participating on middle school, elementary school and recreational teams actually exceeds the number of girls participating on high school teams. In other words, a lot of young women are getting out there and playing, even if they aren't able to join their school teams.

RECREATION, CYO AND OTHER LEAGUES

Recreational, CYO (Catholic Youth Organization), and city/county leagues have also become very popular. Many girls who play on their school basketball teams also play on at least one other team in an outside league. These teams provide opportunities for players at all skill levels to be on a team and to enjoy the game. In many recreational leagues there are no tryouts, and players are assigned to a team based on where they live. CYO leagues start as early as the third grade and end in twelfth grade. New leagues and tourna-

*"Now that I'm here,
we'll turn this pro-
gram around 360
degrees."*

—Jason Kidd

ments are being formed each year to meet the growing demand of youth girls' basketball.

AAU

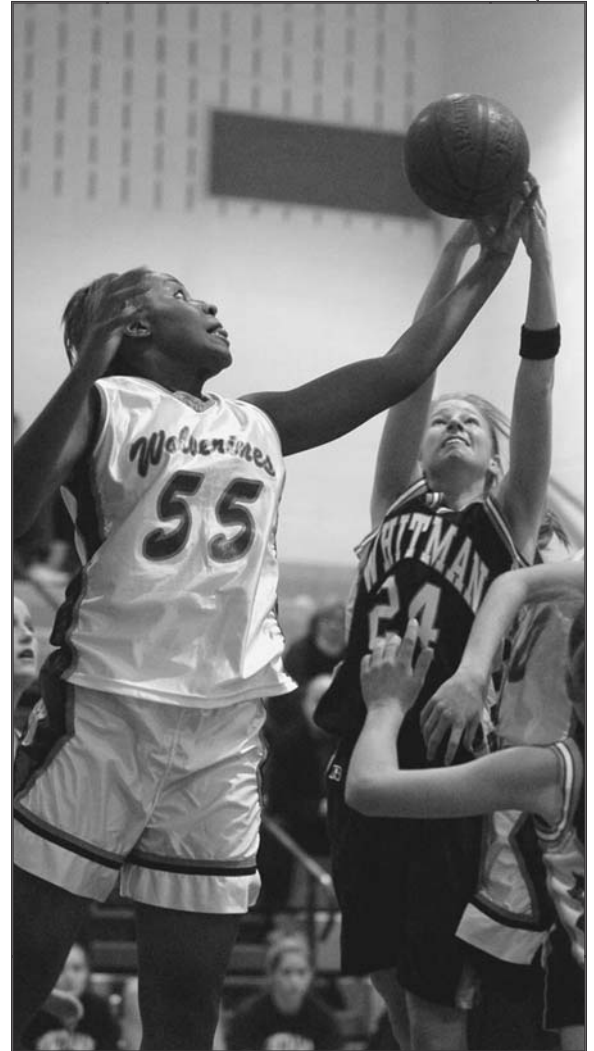
The AAU is one of the largest, nonprofit athletic associations in the United States. It is dedicated to the promotion and development of amateur sports and physical fitness programs. Basketball is now the number one AAU girls' sport and continues to grow each year. AAU girls' basketball has doubled in size over the last 10 years!

AAU has sponsored the formation of hundreds of basketball clubs around the nation. Under the AAU umbrella, athletes are able to play basketball practically year-round on the same team. AAU teams fill the void left by school-sponsored squads that only play serious basketball during the regular winter season, but disband afterward. Perhaps most importantly, AAU teams give players the opportunity to compete at a high level with players at or above their own skill levels (something that a high school team doesn't always guarantee).

The national AAU organization does not decide how tryouts are conducted or how teams are formed. Instead, these issues are left to the local individual clubs to decide. As a result, there can be wide variations in the manner that players are selected and the level of play. The national AAU organization sponsors tournaments throughout the year at both Division I and Division II levels. These tournaments have become important for college recruiting. In fact, many consider AAU basketball to be the center of highly skilled youth play in the United States.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Do the high participation numbers for women's basketball hold at the college level? Yes. There are approximately 14,500 women playing on 1,000 NCAA varsity basketball teams, according to an NCAA 2001–2002 Sports Sponsorship and Participation Report. Divisions



"Sports is the only profession I know that when you retire, you have to go to work."

—Earl Monroe

The Complete Guide to Girls' Basketball



I, II, and III have 4,800, 3,900, and 5,800 women's basketball participants, respectively. Basketball is the only sport with over 1,000 teams, but is not the number one college sport for women in terms of participation. It ranks behind soccer, outdoor track, indoor track, and softball. Part of the reason that basketball drops to number five in college is that most other sports have more players on each team. For instance, the average soccer squad consists of 22 players in contrast to only 14 players for basketball.

In addition to the NCAA, there are also more than 150 colleges that compete as part of the National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and over 200 two-year colleges that are members of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). Many young women also play on college intramural or club teams.

Taking into account players, families and fans, tens of millions of people follow girls' and women's basketball, and the sport is growing. Now you can see why this book is necessary!

"I wanted to have a career in sports when I was young, but I had to give it up. I'm only six feet tall, so I couldn't play basketball. I'm only 190 pounds, so I couldn't play football. And I have 20-20 vision, so I couldn't be a referee."

—Jay Leno

