Women's Sports Finally Get Recognition

By Billy Baker
Sports Writer

A dream of several years for the women's athletic teams at Carolina has come true. Women teams are getting the recognition for which they have worked. The USC Board of Trustees voted to allow women's athletics to come under the funding and guidance of the athletic department Jan. 5.

Helen Timmermans, women's gymnastics coach, was hired as associate director of women's sports. She is now on salary and in charge of seven women's sports: basketball, volleyball, softball, gymnastics, swimming, golf and tennis.

The women's basketball team will take advantage of the dream come true Feb. 4 when it plays at Carolina Coliseum against Anderson Junior College prior to USC's game with Canisius.

Coached by Pam Backhaus, the women's team is 7-1 and think the invitation to play in the Coliseum is a "challenge and an honor."

"I would like to encourage the students to support our efforts," said Backhaus. "We have to show we are worthy of recognition."

Women athletics still have a lot to prove."

"I think girl athletes play for the purest of reasons," she said. "When you talk about playing in the Coliseum you are talking about altering timetables and what we have to realize is that this has never been done before," Backhaus said.

"The organization has helped since we have ceased to be a club," said Backhaus. "Helen (Timmermans) is the women's athletic director and we know who to go to when we want something."

Bo Hagan: "Our women's athletic program is on par with any other in the Southeast."

Donnie Walsh: It is great that the girls will play at the Coliseum.

"I think our women's athletic program is on par with any other program in the state," said Hagan. "I know it is superior to any program in the state."

Starting in July all women's coaches will be paid for coaching and Timmermans will be in charge of hiring and firing women's coaches.

Timmermans said 'The idea of scholarships for women athletes is a possibility, but for for a couple of years."

At the national conference attended by Hagan, the rules committee of the AIAW ruled against scholarships, but a female athlete took the case to court in Orlando, Fla. when she felt discriminated against. The court ruled that females have a right to get athletic scholarships. The rules committee of the AIAW permits women the right to scholarships.

Assistant basketball coach Donnie Walsh likes the idea of the girls playing at the Coliseum. "I think it is great," Walsh said. "Especially great because we don't have a freshman game. They could play at Coliseum any time if they wanted to, but they never asked in the past."

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