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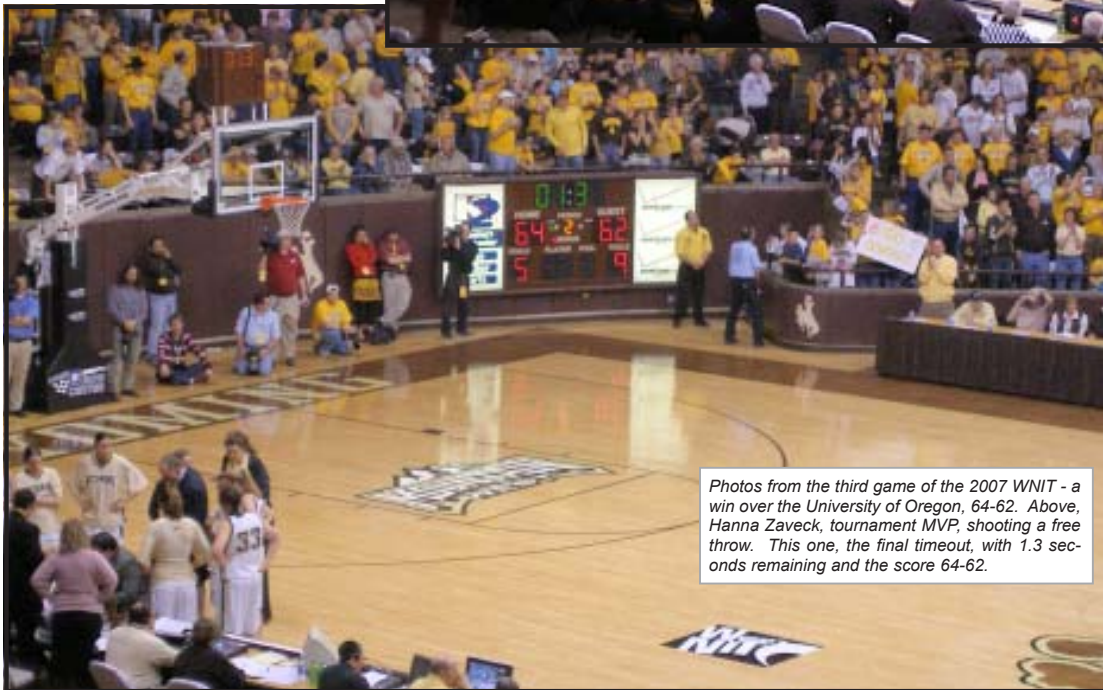
# Wyoming Cowgirls WNIT Champs

The Wyoming Cowgirls, the only national champions of a revenue-producing sport at the University of Wyoming in most of our lifetimes, finished their 2006-2007 basketball season with a flourish.

Their only loss in the final 11 games was a fortuitous one for their newly-found fans. Had they not lost the second game in the Mountain West Conference Tournament to New Mexico, they probably would have played in the NCAA tournament, depriving the thousands who attended any of the six WNIT games that opportunity.

The Cowgirls impressive run to the championship of the WNIT should have come as no surprise. Their eight regular season losses included two a result of a last-second desperate shot by the opponent and none was by more than the 11 point defeat at the hands of Montana. The other seven regular season losses were by 3, 5, 6, 7 (3 times) and 8 points.

Their 20-8 regular season record likely would have been enhanced with another win but the game at Denver University was cancelled because of weather.



Photos from the third game of the 2007 WNIT - a win over the University of Oregon, 64-62. Above, Hanna Zaveck, tournament MVP, shooting a free throw. This one, the final timeout, with 1.3 seconds remaining and the score 64-62.

who did the initial seeding of teams, five teams defeated by the Cowgirls played one fewer game than they did.

Every opponent except first round opponent Nevada -- Missouri, Oregon, South Dakota State, Kansas State and Wisconsin -- had first round byes. Every one of them! Wyoming did not. Had it not been for the fans filling the seats at the A-A, it is likely the Cowgirls would have been sent on the road and would have played at huge disadvantages in Brookings, Manhattan or Madison.

An interesting thing happened on the way to the forum, as Zero Mostel might say. For games one and two, attendance was fair (2,644 for Nevada and 3,595 for Missouri) and my wife and I were able to sit a few rows up from courtside, in line with the free throw line on the end the Cowgirls are on offense in the first half.

For the third game, those seats were suddenly marked: "RESERVED FOR UW TRUSTEES AND GUESTS". Even though our seats at this general admission event progressively moved further up from courtside, they were still adequate.

There were a number of interesting aspects about this year's quest for the championship.

Three of the teams defeated by UW in the tournament had won three of the first nine WNIT championships. Kansas State in 2006, Oregon in 2002 and Wisconsin in 2000.

The Cowgirls set WNIT attendance records for third round games (7,362 - win over Oregon 64-62), quarterfinal games (11,253 - win over South Dakota State 70-59), semifinal games (12,225 - win over Kansas State in three overtimes 89-79) and had the second largest crowd for any WNIT game (15,462 in win over

Wisconsin for the championship 72-56). Wyoming was also the only team in the

WNIT to win more than four games. In an amazing failure by the WNIT officials

|                     | Reb | Asst | Blk | Stl | Pts | 3 Pt   | Min  | TO | Field Goals  | Free Throws  | Pts / Min |
|---------------------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|--------|------|----|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| Hanna Zaveck        | 37  | 29   | 12  | 14  | 104 | 7-21   | 224  | 19 | 25-62 .403   | 40-57 .702   | .464      |
| Amy Bolerjack       | 22  | 22   | 3   | 2   | 85  | 9-24   | 252  | 6  | 23-53 .434   | 30-41 .732   | .337      |
| Justyna Podziemaska | 43  | 22   | 4   | 3   | 89  | 21-42  | 214  | 16 | 28-64 .438   | 12-18 .667   | .416      |
| Dominique Sisk      | 24  | 13   | 0   | 4   | 51  | 3-7    | 217  | 13 | 19-35 .543   | 10-16 .625   | .235      |
| Elizabeth Dissen    | 14  | 1    | 2   | 5   | 29  | 0-0    | 104  | 2  | 13-20 .650   | 3-5 .600     | .279      |
| Megan McGuffey      | 22  | 8    | 3   | 3   | 58  | 2-6    | 136  | 14 | 19-45 .422   | 18-23 .783   | .426      |
| Rebecca Vanderjagt  | 10  | 3    | 3   | 0   | 8   | 0-4    | 67   | 6  | 4-10 .400    | 0-1 .000     | .119      |
| Aubrey Vandiver     | 19  | 3    | 0   | 1   | 28  | 2-3    | 57   | 3  | 12-21 .571   | 2-4 .500     | .491      |
|                     | 191 | 101  | 27  | 32  | 452 | 44-107 | 1271 | 79 | 143-310 .461 | 115-165 .697 | .355      |

The question should be: Where were the UW trustees for the first two games? Why did it take two victories for them to jump on the bandwagon?

For the championship game, the Double A was about 2/3 full at 11:30, an hour and a half before tip-off. And it was all worth it. It was an experience to be remembered.