

Women's basketball

At this writing, the University of Wyoming women's basketball team is ranked No. 21 in the Associated Press Poll. The are No. 22 in the Coaches Poll and No. 22 in the ESPN/USA Poll.

There are eight undefeated teams in the rankings and Wyoming is the lowest ranked of them all.

There will be two more games played before the next Herald and both of the games are on the road against pretty fair teams - Colorado and St. Joseph's. St. Joe's lost by only six points to Rutgers, which is a very good team which was slurred by ignorant remarks of Don Imus.

A recent article in the WT-E, by one whose primary duty is to check for punctuation errors by the staff sportswriters, put his forehead on the bat and spun himself silly trying to write intelligently about the women's game of basketball.

Any comparison between women's and men's basketball is void of reason. Those young enough to count Britney Spears among their favorite female vocalists are probably unaware that it wasn't a lifetime ago that girls were not even given an opportunity to compete in varsity sports at the high school level. Obviously, starting five or six decades after their male counterparts, the gals aren't as likely to be quite at a par with men in basketball.

Young men without much experience with women might be surprised to learn that the fairer sex can, themselves, be selfish. That is not a negative trait unique to men. If the WT-E copy boy doubts that, he need only take in a couple divorce actions to dispel himself of the notion that only men are selfish.

So, guys who play basketball and refuse to share the ball, play defense or take only good shots are not just selfish. They are generally poorly coached and dumb as well. For basketball is a team sport, unlike tennis, golf or swimming, and success is more often found in teamwork than in trying to go it alone. Going it alone can create excitement but seldom brings tournament championships.

The men's and the women's basketball programs at the University of Wyoming are now at polar extremes. Not just because the women's program is a success while the men's is not but because all of the elements of success are seen with the women's team while few of them are, or will be, seen with the men's team.

I have to confess to having discovered the women's game only this March. My wife and I were among the one half of one percent of Wyoming residents (at the absolute most) to have seen all six of the games played in seventeen days of the WNIT in Laramie. I had watched some

of the women's regular season games on television but had never attended a game in person until the WNIT.

To conclude that the girls cannot jump as high, run as fast or dunk like the guys is to state the obvious. And, for those who prefer watching players a foot taller than the girls throw the basket down instead of shooting it up, the men's game will always be preferable.

It is also obvious from the WT-E story by the copy boy that he has not attended or even watched on television any or many women's games. To labor under the delusion that every made shot by the women is a layup proves his ignorance.

To compare the shooting percentages of the women to the men is also foolhardy. If a good writer took out the "throw-downs" (dunks) from the men's statistics, they do not shoot as well as the women. And, typically, women seldom miss a free throw while men often can't throw it in the ocean. Playground basketball played by a lot of the players recruited to even Wyoming does not include taking freethrows. The gals, on the other hand, take advantage of what is called "free" for a reason.

And to believe that turnovers and fouls are more prevalent in the women's game than in the men's is indefensible. As written on these pages after the WNIT, Jody Bolerjack played 252 of the 255 minutes Wyoming played in the 2007 WNIT and she had six turnovers. SIX! UW men's team guards have that many in a half.

The uninformed WT-E scribbler wrote that rebounds in a woman's game hit the floor before someone grabs it. He should try standing under the basket when Aubrey Vandiver is after a rebound. His skinny carcass would be in the cheap seats. Of course the gals can't jump as high as the guys. Nor could they prevail in wrestling, football or swimming against the men.

They are built differently. And thank God for that!

The thrust of his article was that the men's team, however pathetic, will outdraw the

women's. Men's announced attendance benefits from fans not there but holding season tickets. Which gender is on the upswing and which team has dropped off shockingly in the past twenty years?

During the senior years of Fennis Dembo and Eric Leckner, we had season tickets and made the trip to Laramie on treacherous roads. Season seats were not courtside, I guarantee the copy boy. They were up in the upper sections of the A-A. Consistently, crowds were in the five figures. The men's team was that popular.

At the same time, the women probably played before 300 or 400, if that many.

Which team has gone in which direction?

Grandfathers and fathers of college-age athletes played basketball and have an affection for it. Grandmothers did not and few mothers did, so they are often strangers to the women's game.

One of the more noticeable things about attendance at the Cowgirls games is the lack of support by the students. Some will say they're studying, some will say they can't afford the tickets. They came in droves for the last two games of the WNIT but tickets were provided to them free of charge. They may just be lazy.

Attendance at the Cowgirls games will lag behind the Cowboys games. But not since the days of Dembo and Leckner has there been this much excitement at the games. Hanna Zavec, Jodi Bolerjack, Dominique Sisk, Justyna Podziemska, Rebecca Vanderjagt, Elisabeth Dissen, Aubrey Vandiver, Megan McGuffey and their supporting cast of Cowgirls will continue to bring credit and pride to the University and to the State of Wyoming. Good GPAs. One of the players on the men's team stomped an unsuspecting, defenseless player on the opposing team last year while that guy was engaged in a tussle with another UW player. The WT-E can embrace thugs like that and praise greater attendance to watch that style of play. Women's basketball now offers an attraction that will not be found with the men's game at UW for years - if ever again.

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