

Best of the 2000s

Women's DIII News *looks back at the best of the best in Division III basketball from the first decade of the new millennium*

by Gary Rubin, Editor and Publisher

Best of lists are hard to put together, so it's a good thing we only do this once a decade. For the second time, *Women's DIII News* reveals its picks for the Best of the Decade, this time the 2000s.

What a decade it was. Nine different teams captured national championships, and two completed undefeated seasons. There were too many one-loss teams to list, but the quality of women's basketball at the Division III level continued to rise.

Here's a look at the Best Program, Best Team, Best Player, Best Coach and Best Championship Game of the last 10 years, as determined by the *Women's DIII News* staff. ●

Best Program

Washington University. With two national championships during the decade, and four title game appearances, Washington University lays claim to the best Division III women's basketball program of the 2000s.

Runners Up:

Bowdoin — twice had the best record in the country, 2004 and 2007.

Hope — One national title and two seasons with the best overall record.

Scranton — The Lady Royals made three Final Four appearances during the decade.

Southern Maine — Two national championship appearances and three Final Fours in the 2000s.

Best Coach

She shared the title Best Coach of the 1990s, but this time around Washington University's **Nancy Fahey** takes the prize all to herself. Fahey started the decade capping off a four-peat with titles in 2000 and 2001, and finished the 2000s with a pair of Division III runner-up trophies.



Over the decade, the Bears were 248-37 and a national contender every season. Fahey also earned a Molten/WDIIN Coach of the Year trophy along the way and coached two national players of the year.

Runners Up:

Kris Huffman, DePauw — Captured a national title in 2007 and two WDIIN Coach of the Year honors.

Brian Morehouse, Hope — Led his team to a national title and the best record in the country twice.

Mike Strong, Scranton — Three Final Four appearances and many close calls, but always in the thick of the race.

Gary Fifield, Southern Maine — Led the Huskies to three Final Fours and two title game appearances.

Becky Geyer, Trinity — Captured a national title and a second WDIIN Coach of the Year before taking a Division I job.

Best Player

Eastern Connecticut State's Allison Coleman made her national debut as a freshman and went on to become a four-time first-team All-American and two-time national Player of the Year. She led her team to a national championship game and ranks as the school's all-time leader in points, rebounds, assists and steals.



Runners Up:

Amanda Nechuta, Stevens Point — Two-time All-American and WDIIN Player of the Year in 2005.

Ashley Marble, Southern Maine — Two-time All-American and WDIIN Player of the Year in 2007.

Megan Silva, Randolph-Macon — Two-time All-American and WDIIN Player of the Year in 2006

Alia Fischer, Washington — The Best Player in the 1990s spanned into the 2000s during her senior year. Her one season in the new millennium resulted in a 30-0 record and national title.

Best Final

Division III basketball has had some dramatic finishes, and none better than these title games that were anointed the Best Championship Game in the 2000s:

- **2003.** Allison Wooley's jump shot with 11 seconds left gave Trinity (Texas) its first NCAA Division III women's basketball championship with a 60-58 victory over Eastern Connecticut State on March 22, 2003.

All-American Allison Coleman had a chance to tie or win the game for Eastern Connecticut State when she got the ball with six seconds left. She made a move to the basket, lost her dribble, and put up a desperation jump shot that wandered short of the rim.

- **2004.** DePauw held off Washington University 55-52 but not before the Bears had a chance to tie. With just seconds remaining, Halsey Ward's 3-point attempt came up just short and skirted Wash U's attempt at a fifth national title.



Best Team

Thirty wins was the benchmark to make the list of best team, and a 30-win year and a national title was an automatic qualifier.

It's hard to argue with perfection, so for best team the three unbeaten national champions share the top spot.

- 2000 — Washington, 30-0
- 2008 — Howard Payne, 33-0
- 2009 — George Fox, 32-0

Runners Up:

Hope, 2006 — The best record in the country at 33-1, and a national title.

Wis. Stevens Point, 2002 — The Pointers were 30-3 and national champs.

DePauw, 2007 — A national title and a 31-3 record.

Bowdoin, 2004 — The Polar Bears' only loss of the season was in the title game against Wilmington.

Meia Daniels, left, led Howard Payne to a perfect 33-0 mark in 2008 and a spot on the Best Team of the 2000s list.

Best of the 1990s

Since our debut in 1993, *Women's DIII News* has covered Division III basketball inside and out. The last time we put together a Best Of was for the 1990s.

Wondering what the Best Of the 1990s picks were? Here's a look back at our selections from the December, 1999, issue:

Best Final:

1997 — NYU 72, Wis. Eau Claire 70. Violet guard Marsha Harris hit a layin with 1.5 seconds remaining to give NYU the national title.

Best Conference:

Ohio Athletic Conference. The league claimed two national titles and had a representative in the Final Four eight times, and a title game participant four straight years from 1993 to 1996.

Best Player:

Alia Fischer, Washington

Best Coach:

Dixie Jeffers, Capital
Nancy Fahey, Washington

Best Team:

Capital, 1995, 33-0

Best Program:

Capital. Won 20 or more games every season, captured two national titles, went to four Final Fours, and had a 60-game win streak.

What do you think?

Agree? Disagree? Let us know what you think of our Best of the 2000s selections.

Send us an email or DM on Twitter about the teams, coaches, players and games that you would add to our lists.

We want to hear from you!

Best Conference

University Athletic Association. A UAA member captured the first two championships of the decade when Washington went back-to-back to cap a four-peat. The Bears were back in the Final Four in 2008 and 2009. Rochester also appeared in two Final Fours during the decade and NYU represented the league in 2007.

Runner Up: The **Little East** had a representative in three national title games and although it did not capture a title, it did produce three WDIIN Players of the Year during the decade.