



Chris Voelz, assistant athletic director, says Oregon's switch to the NCAA from the AIAW is motivated by money as well as better competition. "The NCAA was

looming an ever-loving gold carrot in front of our face. We saw it as a way to nibble at the carrot." Oregon will compete in NCAA championships this season.

AIAW headed for new acronym - R.I.P.

By DONALD COULTER
Of the Emerald

NCAA may gain control of women's sports

At the rate things are going, the AIAW probably won't exist one year from today.

The AIAW—Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women—has lost 20 percent of its membership (a drop from 961 schools to 772) since the end of

the last school year. Another 12 percent will not participate in AIAW national championships this year.

The defections are due to a new "old" kid on the block. For the first time, the NCAA (Na-

tional Collegiate Athletic Association) is offering national championships in women's sports. And they're luring everybody who's anybody in women's athletics away from the AIAW.

Prior to this year, the AIAW was the voice for women's athletics. Formed in 1971, and riding the crest of Title IX legislation, it took women's sports from the days of bobby socks and hoop skirts to the revenues of bigtime television contracts.

But all that changed on Jan. 13, 1981. On that date, the NCAA executive council voted to offer national championships for women, starting with the 1981-82 academic year.

The consequences have proved disastrous for the AIAW.

Eighteen of last season's top 20 women's basketball teams have shifted to the NCAA. Virtually all West Coast schools, which comprise much of the best in women's athletics, will compete in NCAA championships this year. Only 52 percent of Division I schools that were involved previously in AIAW championships will return this year.

The decisions behind these schools abandoning the AIAW for the NCAA are varied and complex. Many coaches and

athletic administrators were attracted by the financial benefits and prestige offered by the NCAA. Others wanted to escape the stringency of AIAW rules. Most cite a combination of both these reasons.

Chris Voelz, Oregon's assistant athletic director and head coach of the University's volleyball team, falls into this latter category. Though Oregon has yet to join the NCAA governing body for women's athletics, it will participate in NCAA championships this year.

Voelz says one of the reasons behind Oregon's switch was to save money. In contrast to the AIAW, the NCAA will pay for traveling expenses to send teams to its national championship. Oregon spent an average of \$60,000 annually to send women's teams to AIAW championships over the past few years. The savings will be used to bolster other aspects of the women's budget, she says.

"The NCAA was looming an ever-loving gold carrot in front of our faces," Voelz says. "We saw it as a chance to nibble at the carrot."

In addition, Voelz says Oregon was lured to the NCAA by the huge national shift in competition. With many of the best women's teams in the

country to participate in NCAA championships this year, the competition in the AIAW championships will be watered down.

"There would be a chance for us to finish higher in the AIAW's—and maybe even win a championship," she says. "But we don't want to be a big fish in a teeny pool."

Voelz is also disappointed with the AIAW's method of self-regulation. A completely volunteer organization, the AIAW has strict recruiting rules to protect the student-athlete, but often lacks the means to enforce those rules.

"The AIAW needs to be more realistic," she says. "They have moved into big-time athletics, but there are flaws that exist with their policing system."

Tom Heinonen, head coach for women's cross-country and track teams at Oregon, agrees with Voelz. "The restrictive rules (in the AIAW) are there to benefit the athlete, but on the other hand, the rules are unenforced."

"Philosophically, it's fine. But practically speaking, it's absurd. Schools cheat right and left."

Heinonen's point illustrates a major qualm about the AIAW that many coaches and administrators share. The organization can not—or will not—come up with money for a full-time enforcement unit. Instead, it professes not to need one.

"You can't legislate morality," AIAW president Donna Lupiano said several years back, "but I think that women are different than men. I don't think we're doomed to repeating the men's mistakes."

The AIAW hasn't suffered the scandals that men's athletics have gone through, but the opportunities to cheat remain. Almost everyone involved with intercollegiate sports feels that

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