

Hammon Named To Spurs Coaching Staff

Rapid City Native Will Be First Female Paid Assistant Coach For NBA Team

BY JON KRAWCZYNSKI
AP Basketball Writer



Hammon

The San Antonio Spurs hired WNBA star Becky Hammon on Tuesday, making her the first full-time, paid assistant on an NBA coaching staff.

Hammon, who plans to retire from the San Antonio Stars after this season, spent time working with coach Gregg Popovich and the Spurs last season and made a strong impression on an organization with a history of forward-thinking moves.

During the 2001-02 season, Cleveland Cavaliers coach John Lucas brought Lisa Boyer into the team's practices and some games. Boyer, now an assistant at South Carolina, was not paid by the Cava-

liers and did not travel with the team, but did work with the players and coaches that season.

Last season, Hammon attended Spurs practices, film sessions and sat behind the bench for the NBA champions at home game this season. She's been friends with Spurs teammates Tony Parker and Tim Duncan since competing in an NBA All-Star shooting competition in 2008.

"I very much look forward to the addition of Becky Hammon to our staff," Popovich said. "Having observed her working with our team this past season, I'm confident her basketball IQ, work ethic and inter-

personal skills will be a great benefit to the Spurs."

It's the latest trailblazing move for the Spurs, who hired European coaching legend Ettore Messina to join Popovich's staff earlier this summer and have been the leaders in bringing international players to the NBA for almost two decades.

The Spurs are coming off of their fifth NBA title, a decisive victory over the Miami Heat in June. The organization's stature as the league's gold standard, along with Popovich and GM RC Buford being viewed as two of the very best in the business, led other women who have long dreamed of coaching in the NBA to hope that this is the first major step toward bringing more women into the league.

"I was so excited and pleased

and the one thing that people have to remember is that the San Antonio Spurs don't do anything for effect," said Nancy Lieberman, a former star player who was a head coach in the NBA Development League in 2009 and now serves as the GM of the Texas Legends. "That's not who they are. They don't do this for the record-breaking barrier. They do things out of respect."

"And the fact that coach Popovich has this much respect for Becky's basketball IQ, for how she handles herself with the guys in practice, her ability to relate to them, I'm sure he saw so much when she was working with them last fall. I'm sure he didn't hire her because she was a woman. I'm sure he hired her because she was the

best person for the job."

Charlotte Hornets sideline reporter Stephanie Ready, who served as an assistant on the Copin State men's team as well as in the D-League, called Popovich the perfect person to hire Hammon.

"Because he's proven he has a tremendous track record and he does not make bad decisions," she said.

Hammon's reputation as a smart, hard-nosed, tough-minded player makes her a perfect fit for Popovich's staff, Ready said. Hammon made six All-Star teams and averaged 13.1 points in her 16 seasons.

"This will open the door for other women, even like myself," Lieberman said. "My goal is to coach in the NBA and you've got to start somewhere. So this is a great day."

Tabor Opens State Amateur Tourney Today

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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The Tabor Bluebirds felt that they did not live up to their high standards this season.

That perspective could change if the Bluebirds make a deep run at state.

Tabor (12-9) plays the opening game of the South Dakota State Class B Amateur Baseball Tournament tonight (Wednesday) at 6 p.m. The Bluebirds draw Clear Lake.

"With the talent we had, I thought we'd be a little better," said Bluebirds assistant manager Joe Vavruska. "We've come on lately. Our hitting is starting to pick up, but we're still leaving too many guys on base."

Chris Sutera and Nathan Kloucek share the team lead with a .338 batting average. Rob Keppen has provided a late-season surge, taking a .307 batting average and a team-best 21 RBI into state. Wes Kloucek (.292, 13 RBI) and Doug Vanecek (.256, 19 RBI) have also been contributors.

"Rob has come on quite a bit in the last six games," Vavruska said. "Nathan Kloucek and Chris Sutera have been solid. For the most part, our guys have been steady."

Manager Jon Vavruska has been the leader on the mound, going 4-2 with a 3.20 ERA and 55 strikeouts in 59 innings. Nathan Kloucek (4-2, 3.98 ERA, 24 K in 36 2/3 IP), Doug Vanecek (1-3, 8.40 ERA, 33 K in 30 IP) and Keppen (2-0, 1.05 ERA, 8 K in 17 1/2 IP) have all provided valuable innings.

"Pitching has been our downfall," Joe Vavruska said. "We've given up a lot of walks (121 in 181 2/3 IP), and it's come back to hurt us."

The Bluebirds will be without Blase Vanecek (.319, 12 RBI; 0-2, 9.00 ERA, 9 K in 24 IP) for the post-season due to injury. They were able to add three pick-up players: Menno's Josh Berndt and Doug Hall, and Freeman's Jake Weier.

Tabor made a second-round exit in the state tournament a year ago, and looks to earn an extended stay this season.

"We're hoping everyone comes ready to play," Joe Vavruska said. "We usually tend to get down right away and have to work our way out of a hole. If we do that here, it could be a one-and-done deal."

You can follow James D. Cimburek on Twitter at twitter.com/JCimburek. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net

Cavaliers Make Miller Deal Official

CLEVELAND (AP) — The Cavaliers officially announced the signings of Mike Miller and James Jones, two shooters who won NBA titles with LeBron James in Miami.

Miller and Jones agreed to terms with the Cavs shortly after James announced he was returning to Cleveland and signed a two-year, \$41 million contract with the club.

A 14-year veteran, Miller has played Orlando, Memphis, Minnesota, Washington and Miami. He's averaged 11.8 points, 4.6 rebounds and 2.8 assists. Miller gives the Cavs a needed outside shooting threat and a player who knows how to get open for James.

Last season, Miller connected on 46 percent (107-233) of his 3-pointers with the Grizzlies.

Archery | IFAA World Field Championships

Notebook: Archer Calls Yankton Support 'Beautiful'



BY JEREMY HOECK
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A common theme among the countries represented at this week's International Field Archery Association (IFAA) World Field Championships has been the overwhelmingly positive support from the Yankton community.

For Alessandro Salvanti, the lone archer from Italy at the five-day tournament, the support he has already experienced has surpassed what he saw three years ago.

"For me, it's coming back," he said during Tuesday's round Salvanti — like many of this week's archers — was previously in Yankton in 2011 for an instructor course.

"I'm really pleased with the courses and the venue," he said.

Beyond the National Field Archery Association (NFAA) complex and new ranges, Salvanti said he was surprised by the archery knowledge community-wide when he visits local stores, restaurants, or his hotel.

"Everyone knows about archery, and to me, that's beautiful," he said. "We don't have that in Italy."

Why not? "It's all about soccer back home," he said with a smile.

Particularly when tournaments feature divisions that span youth on up to adults, the economic impact from an event like this week's IFAA tournament can be substantial, Salvanti said.

"When we travel, a lot of people, families and their kids, come too, so there's a very big impact on the community," he said.

Yankton is no different, he added.

"If you don't shoot, you can't really understand," Salvanti said, while walking up to the next target.

The two archery federations in Italy have tried to get the sport on local television and into the media, Salvanti said.

"We had to let people

On Target

Action continued on day two of the International Field Archery Association's World Field Championships on Tuesday in Yankton.

ABOVE: Jane Dohlhoff, front, and Rika Landsberg, both of South Africa, line up their shots Tuesday during the second day of the International Field Archery Association (IFAA) World Field Championships in Yankton.

RIGHT: Subhash Nair, a coach and manager for a group of archers from India, takes photos Tuesday during the second day of the International Field Archery Association (IFAA) World Field Championships in Yankton.

JEREMY HOECK/P&D



Rain Forces Coyotes Inside On Second Day Of Fall Camp

BY ALAN DALE
Vermillion Plain Talk

VERMILLION — Mother Nature forced the University of South Dakota Coyotes inside the Dakota Dome for day two of their fall preseason practice slate on Tuesday as head coach Joe Glenn kept the squad fired up with a new season approaching.

Glenn, whose team went 4-8 in 2013, is appreciative that his team is looking strong on its feet.

"I told our team after practice that it's great to be healthy," Glenn said. "We were so beat up at the end of last year. We were beat up at running back and didn't close the season like we wanted. Even after spring ball we didn't look like we do now."

"We look faster, we look speedier, we look quicker, and that's what I am seeing on both sides of the ball."

As the team went through drills and some light skeleton scrimmaging, the Coyotes appeared nimble and fast at a number of skill positions while intensity was high.

Glenn said that along with his now healthy vets the new guys are "starting to move into it."

"Some things are happening," Glenn said. "We have our whole team back and I am excited with the direction we are going."

Rah-Rah Coyotes

It didn't take long to see the offenses and defenses fall into the pattern of backing their own during skeleton, but each side found plenty of time to pick up the other every chance it got.

"I love it, there is a lot spirit and enthusiasm and there should be," Glenn said. "We haven't put the pads on yet. They are not tired yet, but every day they need to get better and every day I am going to challenge them to keep that energy and enthusiasm. We need that to get better."

Jasper The Friendly Speedster

Senior running back Jasper

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NASCAR Big Winner With Jeff, Junior On Top

BY JENNA FRYER
AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — It was Jeff Gordon's championship to lose just a week ago after his record fifth win at the Brickyard. Then Dale Earnhardt Jr. completed a season sweep at Pocono and now he's the guy to beat.

Jeff and Junior, two of NASCAR's biggest stars heating up during this lazy summer stretch of racing. NASCAR really couldn't ask for anything more.

Well, it wouldn't hurt if Tony Stewart threw his hat into the ring, too. As of Tuesday, it will be one year since the broken leg that ended his season, and Stewart has now gone 14 months without a victory. He is on the outside looking in on the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship field.

Stewart is one of the very few drivers who move the needle for NASCAR, and he has just five races remaining to grab a win he desperately needs to make him automatically eligible to race for the championship. For now, the only noise Smoke is making on the track is his constant sniping against blocking (do as he

says, not as he does), but it might be time for him to block his way into Victory Lane.

That would give NASCAR the trifecta for its highly anticipated Chase, which for the first time will feature elimination rounds and a winner-take-all finale. Picture the glee on Brian France's face in Phoenix if it's some combination of Junior and Jeff, Smoke and Jimmie Johnson, Brad Keselowski, Kyle Busch and Kevin Harvick all jockeying to make the Final Four showdown at Homestead.

Maybe Stewart makes it, maybe he doesn't — and really, he needs to be in the Chase because the intensity is always higher when Smoke is involved — but that's just another element of this win-win time for NASCAR.

The powers that be can't ask for anything more than the 24 and 88 flexing their muscles right now, when neither team has anything to lose. They are playing with house money, having fun seeing what they are made of before the 10-race Chase.

For Gordon, the points leader for 14 of the last 15 weeks, it's about building the confidence of his team and making them believe a champi-

onship is possible. There was no doubt after the Brickyard victory, and he followed it by leading a race-high 63 laps Sunday at Pocono before finishing sixth.

The win went to Earnhardt, who used crew chief Steve Letarte's strategy to complete the Pocono sweep. It was his third win of the season — the same amount of victories Earnhardt earned all of 2006 through 2013 — and came just four days after Hendrick Motorsports announced Letarte's replacement for 2014.

It showed the 88 team isn't letting up, and Letarte is determined to guide Earnhardt to his first championship before he turns him over to Greg Ives at the end of the season.

Both will have to contend with Hendrick teammate Johnson, who may or may not be playing possum. He doesn't have a top-10 finish since the last week of June, but it's not unusual for Johnson, much like a swimmer, to taper off before turning it up several notches when everything is on the line.

Then there's Harvick, who seems to be up front and in con-

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