

NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S
BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 113 submitted earlier by Senators DODD and LIEBERMAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 113) commending the Huskies of the University of Connecticut for winning the 2003 NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge the outstanding accomplishments of this year's NCAA women's basketball champions—the University of Connecticut Huskies—and offer, along with my colleague Senator LIEBERMAN, a Senate resolution commending the Huskies for another phenomenal season.

Sports and other forms of entertainment have taken a backseat over the past few weeks, and rightfully so, as our full national attention has been focused on our brave service men and women risking—and some losing—their lives in our war with Iraq.

The beginning of this year's NCAA tournament coincided almost to the hour with the beginning of America's war with Iraq. For millions of Americans who eyes were glued to the television watching live coverage of our swift invasion, and whose hearts and prayers remain with our troops overseas, the NCAA tournament offered us all a much needed diversion.

Compared to the stakes in the real battles being fought by our young men and women in cities and towns across Iraq, the stakes in this year's tournament seem very insignificant.

But watching the NCAA tournament reminded us of the simple joy we feel from witnessing America's finest young athletes engage in the heights of competition.

And for thousands of soldiers who watched the games live by satellite in the Persian Gulf, it gave them a little taste of home, where, it is my hope, they will be returning very, very soon.

I would like to take a few moments to commend all the participants in the men's and women's basketball tournament this year. I want to especially congratulate the Syracuse Orangemen for their victory over Kansas on Monday night in the men's championship game.

It was truly a spectacular year for the Big East, which also included St. John's winning the NIT championship.

But most of all, I would like to specifically recognize the UConn Lady Huskies for their tremendous accomplishments this season, culminating with winning the national championship over their arch-rival Tennessee last night, by a score of 73-68.

A casual observer picking up a newspaper today might remark, "UConn

wins. Just like every year." And indeed, this marks the second straight year, and the third time in the last four years, that the Lady Huskies have ended the season as champions.

But anyone who has followed UConn knows that this year was not just like any other year—and it certainly wasn't like last year. Last season, an undefeated UConn team, led by four outstanding All-American seniors—Sue Bird, Swin Cash, Tamika Williams, and Asjha Jones—won its games by an average of 35 points.

After these four women graduated—each one moving on to play professionally in the WNBA—many pundits believed that a younger, less experienced UConn team filled with underclassmen, and not a single senior, had little chance to win much of anything this season. To many, this was considered a rebuilding year. Preseason polls had the Huskies ranked as low as 12th in the Nation.

Yet through grit, determination, talent, teamwork—and an exceptional coaching staff led by Geno Auriemma—the Huskies exceeded all expectations. They opened the season with 31 straight wins, extending their record winning streak to 70 games—one of the greatest streaks in the history of team sports.

After moving with relative ease through the first few rounds of the NCAA tournament, they survived a grueling test against Texas in the semifinal game last Sunday night, when they rallied from a 9-point deficit with 12 minutes remaining to win by only two points. And last night, they held off a furious late rally by Tennessee.

As usual, the tremendous play of two-time All-American junior Diana Taurasi sparked the Huskies to victory. This year, Ms. Taurasi sparked the Huskies to victory. This year, Ms. Taurasi rewrote the record books, as she put together one of the most outstanding seasons in the history of women's college basketball. She was recognized as the player of the year by every organization that gives out that honor, and was also named the Most Outstanding Player of the NCAA East Regional and the Final Four.

Her 157 points in the NCAA tournament represented the third highest total in history. And her on and off court leadership was a steady force for such a young team, prompting one of her teammates to describe her as "the most amazing leader you could ask for."

But it was not only Diana Taurasi who won the championship for UConn. In fact, in the final game, despite scoring 28 points, she did not score a single point in the last 6 minutes. Instead, she relied upon her teammates to take center stage. The final free throws that inched the team closer to victory were made by a freshman, Ann Strother, who played one of the best games of her young career. And the steal that clinched the game was made by a soph-

omore reserve, Defensive Player of the Year, Ashley Battle.

Last night's game showed all of America what we in Connecticut have known for years: that the Lady Huskies are not a collection of individual players, but a team in every sense of the word.

Though the players all played their hearts out this year, UConn's success is also a testimony to their outstanding coach, Geno Auriemma. This year, Coach Auriemma was recognized for the fourth time as the Coach of the Year by the Associated Press and by the United States Basketball Writers Association. In his amazing 18 years as head coach of the Huskies, he has won 501 games and lost only 99.

His success has made him one of the most recognizable figures in the Nutmeg State. Coach Auriemma has taught his players not only how to win, but how to do so with grace.

In an age when sportsmanship has become almost a forgotten word, UConn women stand as a model which all young children can emulate, extending helping hands to fallen opponents and congratulating them after a game's conclusion.

And every single student-athlete brought to UConn by Coach Auriemma has received her undergraduate degree.

The success of the Lady Huskies has extended far beyond their own team. During their recent dynasty, women's basketball, and women's athletics in general, have risen to new prominence. This year, for the first time ever, all 63 games in the women's NCAA tournament were televised nationally. Over 28,000 fans attended last night's title game at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, and millions more watched on television.

I am proud that the UConn Huskies have contributed to the flourishing of women's sports in America. Anyone who watched last night's game knows why this is so: the athletic ability of these women is truly amazing, matched only by their intensity and enthusiasm. And the caliber of women's basketball will only continue to get better and better as more and more young girls are inspired by these athletes to play sports in elementary and high school.

I would like to recognize every member of the Huskies: players Ashley Valley, Diana Taurasi, Maria Conlon, Stacey Marron, Morgan Valley, Nicole Wolff, Ashley Battle, Willnett Crockett, Jessica Moore, Barbara Turner, Ann Strother, Head Coach Geno Auriemma, Associate Head Coach Chris Dailey, and Assistant Coaches Tonya Cardoza and Jamelle Elliott.

I would also like to congratulate the runners-up, the University of Tennessee Volunteers, and their Head Coach Pat Summitt, for an outstanding season as well. For years, Tennessee has been synonymous with success in women's basketball, and there is no doubt that when the Huskies won last night, they beat the best.

With the great joy and pride that I and all Connecticut residents feel right now, I am almost sorry to see the season end. But with every single member of the team set to return next year. I am already looking forward to another great season. If anyone can top this year's accomplishments, I know the Huskies can.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the University of Connecticut Huskies on their national championship, the fourth in the school's history. With their impressive 73-68 victory over the Tennessee Lady Vols, another powerhouse program, the Huskies proved that they could do much more than rebuild their team after last year's undefeated season. The Huskies showed that they could repeat as the best team in the land. That makes them just the third repeat champion in women's college basketball history.

With this victory, the great Geno Auriemma—national coach of the year—has earned a place, alongside Jim Calhoun of course, as one of the best basketball coaches in America. Diana Taurasi, the Naismith Player of the Year and the Final Four's Most Outstanding Player, has become a full-fledged superstar. And the rest of this young team has demonstrated a harmony and chemistry that are almost impossible to match, especially for such a young group. Do you realize this is the first team ever to win the championship without a senior on the roster? That says a lot about the coaching prowess of Geno, the leadership of Diana, and the spirit of the UConn program.

This season, things did not come quite as easy as they did in the last one. Last year, the program dominated with its four superstar seniors and its then-sophomore phenom. This time, many, many games were close. Sometimes they came close to blowing big leads. They even lost . . . once. Honestly, after their record-breaking 70-game winning streak, that single loss in an otherwise perfect season was big, big news in my State of Connecticut.

But this team did not flinch. They did not waver. They kept their eyes on the prize and reached down into their gut, game after game.

The championship game itself was no different. It was intense, hard fought. Everybody found a way to contribute. Tough play in the paint, graceful outside shooting. Strong defense. And "D"—that's Diana—scored 28 in a passionate and poised performance. After the game, she was humble about it. "No superstars, just blue collar," she said.

In the process, Connecticut-Tennessee has become, hands down, the best rivalry in women's college basketball. The Huskies against the Vols. Geno Auriemma against Pat Summit, both basketball legends. And, with my condolences to the Tennessee delegation, I must say proudly that Con-

necticut has the upper hand, with four straight victories over the Lady Vols, including in the 1995, 2000, and 2003 title games.

I do not want to get mushy here, but when speaking of the Huskies, it is hard to stop myself from wagging my tail with joy. All of Connecticut, and especially girls who love basketball like my daughter, are cheering today, and eager to welcome the Huskies home for a victory celebration.

With so much success already under the belt of this great program, it is hard to say that we are surprised by what they have accomplished yet again. But with such a remarkable road to their second straight title, it is easy to say we are proud.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution and preamble be agreed to en bloc, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 113) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 113

Whereas the University of Connecticut women's basketball team won its third national championship in 4 years by defeating arch-rival University of Tennessee by the score of 73 to 68;

Whereas the Huskies finished the 2002-2003 season with a record of 37 wins and 1 loss, and have now won 76 of their last 77 games;

Whereas during the 2002-2003 season the Huskies won their 70th game in a row, setting a new record for NCAA Division I Women's Basketball;

Whereas Coach Geno Auriemma has been coaching the Huskies for 18 years, and achieved his 500th career win this season;

Whereas Coach Auriemma won his second-straight Coach of the Year honor this year;

Whereas Diana Taurasi was chosen as the national women's player of the year, and the NCAA Tournament's most valuable player;

Whereas Ashley Battle was chosen as Big East defensive player of the year;

Whereas the high caliber of the Huskies in both athletics and academics has significantly advanced the sport of women's basketball and provided inspiration for future generations of young men and women alike; and

Whereas the Huskies unparalleled success continues to bring enormous pride and joy to the people of Connecticut and to sports aficionados around the country: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate commends the Huskies of the University of Connecticut for—

(1) completing the 2002-2003 women's basketball season with a record of 37 wins and 1 loss, including winning their record 70th game in a row; and

(2) winning the 2003 NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship, their fourth national championship.

HONORING THE LIFE OF NBC REPORTER DAVID BLOOM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sen-

ate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 114, introduced earlier today by Senators DAYTON and COLEMAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 114) honoring the life of NBC reporter David Bloom, and expressing the deepest condolences of the Senate to his family on his death.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements thereto be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 114) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, is as follows:

S. RES. 114

Whereas the Senate has learned with sadness of the death of NBC Reporter David Bloom;

Whereas David Bloom, a native of Edina, Minnesota, greatly distinguished himself by his rapid rise in the field of journalism;

Whereas, most recently, David Bloom was embedded with the Third Infantry Division of the United States Army to provide in-depth reporting on the war in Iraq;

Whereas David Bloom, as a skilled and determined reporter, covered many major news stories for NBC News, including reporting from Israel on the escalating violence in the Middle East, the recovery efforts from Ground Zero after September 11, 2001, the war on terrorism at home, and the Washington, D.C., sniper story;

Whereas, while covering the White House beat between 1997 and 2000, David Bloom reported on the Maryland Peace Summit with Yassir Arafat and Benjamin Netanyahu, on Operation Desert Fox in Iraq, and on the NATO air campaign in Kosovo;

Whereas, prior to being named White House Correspondent, David Bloom was a Los Angeles-based correspondent for NBC News, where he reported extensively on the Unabomber, the Freeman ranch standoff, and the war in Bosnia;

Whereas David Bloom was a co-recipient of the 1992 George Foster Peabody Award, a winner of the Radio-Television News Directors Association Edward R. Murrow Award for his coverage of Hurricane Andrew, and a 1991 Regional Emmy Award winner for Investigative Journalism for his report on the shipment of arms to Iraq from south Florida;

Whereas David Bloom was a devoted husband to his wife, Melanie, and a proud father to three exceptional daughters, Nicole, Christine, and Ava; and

Whereas David Bloom's life was distinguished for its great ambition, multitude of accomplishments, standards of excellence, dedication to family, and important contributions to the dissemination of unbiased information to citizens throughout the country: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) pays tribute to the outstanding career and devoted work of David Bloom;

(2) expresses its deepest condolences to his family; and