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WKU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Former WKU coach Sanderford inducted into WBHOF

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Former Western Kentucky women's basketball coach Paul Sanderford, who led the program to three NCAA Final Fours, was inducted Saturday into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

WKU Athletics

Former Western Kentucky women's basketball coach Paul Sanderford has been inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

Sanderford was one of eight members of the Class of 2022 honored at an induction ceremony Saturday at the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in Knoxville, Tenn.

"I first would like to thank the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame and the induction committee for electing me into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame. Quite an honor," Sanderford said in his induction speech during the ceremony, which streamed live on ESPN+. "A lot of my friends have become hall of famers. I didn't know if I had done enough or worked hard enough, or if my wife had made me work hard enough, to get here."



Van Chancellor, a member of the 2001 class inducted into the WBHOF, was there as Sanderford's presenter.

Sanderford thanked many people during his speech in addition to the WBHOF and Chancellor, including "the real head coach" – his wife, Yvette – and his son, Aaron, and his wife, Amy.

He also thanked several former players and coaches – a group that featured Michelle Clark-Heard and Jeff Walz. Clark-Heard played for and coached with Sanderford and

is now head coach at Cincinnati. Walz began his coaching career as a graduate assistant at WKU under Sanderford and is now head coach at Louisville.

“I’ve missed a lot of people out there that have helped me along the way and along the path,” Sanderford said. “A lot of my heroes are in the Hall of Fame – people that I respect tremendously.”

Sanderford served as head coach at WKU for 15 seasons (1983-97) and amassed 365 total wins. He led the Lady Toppers to three Final Fours, including the 1992 national championship game. WKU made 12 NCAA tournament appearances under Sanderford and posted 20 wins in all but two seasons with the program.

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The Lady Toppers earned 15 NCAA tournament victories during his tutelage, advancing to at least the Sweet Sixteen four times. WKU claimed five Sun Belt Conference regular-season championships and seven league

tournament titles under Sanderford. He earned SBC Coach of Year honors three times (1983, 1986 and 1991), while coaching seven different All-Americans.

Sanderford took over as head coach for the women's basketball team at Nebraska in 1997, leading the Huskers to three consecutive NCAA tournament appearances (1998, 1999 and 2000).

Sanderford returned to the WKU sidelines for four seasons as an assistant coach for the men's basketball team in 2003.

He was inducted into the WKU Athletics Hall of Fame in 2008 and has a jersey in the rafters of E.A. Diddle Arena bearing his name.

"All of you here tonight know that I didn't make a single shot, get even one rebound or make a single defensive stop, but they've credited me in junior college and Division I with 616 wins," Sanderford said. "It takes players to win, it takes commitment and I had all of that. I want to recognize all of my former players who are here tonight – thank you so much.

"I have been fortunate to have coached so many great young women who have learned to give themselves for the good of the team and to get up after a tough loss and go back to work at the next practice and continue to strive to be the best they can be. It's not easy, but if you think about

it, nothing that is worthwhile in life is easy. Life can be difficult, but believe in yourself, you family and trust in God, and you can get it done together."

In addition to Sanderford, Debbie Antonelli, Alice "Cookie" Barron, Doug Bruno, Becky Hammon, Delisha Milton-Jones, Bob Schneider and Penny Taylor were also inducted into the WBHOF.

"If a guy like me – the only son of a farmer in eastern North Carolina – can see the world and make a living – and a decent living – while chasing a bouncing ball, then anything is possible," Sanderford said.{&end}

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