

Women Coaches Symposium

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WCS Speakers

Carol Hutchins is the winningest coach in NCAA softball history. Hutchins guided the Wolverines to an NCAA title and 22 Big Ten Conference titles and solidified Michigan among the top softball programs in the country. She was inducted into the National Fastpitch Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2006. With a career record of 1,707-551-5 over her 39 total seasons as a NCAA head coach, Hutchins is the winningest coach in NCAA softball history.



"Hutch" was a part of the Michigan softball program since 1983 when she joined the staff as an assistant coach under Bob DeCarolis. She moved into the head coach position in 1985 and, in each of her 38 head coaching seasons, has continued Michigan's tradition of softball success. Michigan has never suffered a losing season in program history.

Hutchins' squads have captured 22 Big Ten regular-season titles, 10 Big Ten Tournament championships and qualified for the NCAA Tournament 29 times (1992-93, '95-2019, '21-22), earning 18 NCAA Regional crowns and making 12 appearances in the NCAA Women's College World Series (1995-98, 2001-02, '04-'05, '09, '13, '15-'16).

She has earned 18 Big Ten Conference Coach of the Year honors, eight NFCA Regional Coach of the Year awards and a pair of NFCA National Coach of the Year honors. In 2016, Hutchins was named the inaugural recipient of espnW's Pat Summitt Coaching Award, presented to the coach who "exemplifies the character and courage" of the legendary basketball coach who led the Tennessee Lady Vols.

Read more about this year's Jean K. Freeman Keynote Speaker >



Dr. Erin Ayala,
*Owner &
Founder, Skadi
Sport Psychology*

With over a decade of research and clinical experience, **Dr. Ayala** is a Licensed Psychologist and Certified Mental Performance Consultant based in Minneapolis. She specializes in working with girls, women, and non-binary endurance athletes. Common presenting concerns include performance anxiety, injury recovery, and self-criticism. Dr. Ayala is a published author of over 20 research articles and book chapters, and has been featured in Trailrunner Magazine, the New York Times, and other media outlets. Beyond her professional achievements, she is an accomplished cyclist, having landed on National podiums in road racing, fat bike racing, virtual racing, and gravel racing over the past few years.



Christine Bright, *Lead
Consultant and
Trainer/Center
for Healing and
Justice Through
Sport*

Christine Bright has been working in the Sport Based Youth Development field for over a decade as a coach, mentor, and program director. She has coached soccer at all levels, including U-5, a college team, and everything in between. Christine rounds out her love for sports as a tool for learning and growth with her experience working with girls and doing feminism and activism work with young people. She also loves to help her community by consulting for mission-driven organizations to improve their program evaluation and strategic planning.

A veteran leader with 20+ years of experience in athletic administration, **Vanessa Fuchs** joined WeCOACH as Chief Executive Officer in March 2022. Before WeCOACH, she served 12 years as Senior Associate Athletics Director and Senior Woman Administrator



Vanessa Fuchs,

CEO of WeCOACH

at her alma mater, Florida State University. Vanessa's tenure at FSU began in 2010, where she served in a variety of important leadership roles over the past decade. Named the 2015 Women Leaders in College Sports Division I Administrator of the Year and an FSU Champion Beyond the Game honoree in 2016, she was instrumental in providing strategic direction for departmental initiatives focused on student-athlete welfare, enhancing athletic performance, fundraising and revenue generation, gender equity, and diversity and inclusion.

In June of 2013, former Florida State President Dr. Eric Barron named Vanessa the school's interim Athletics Director as she became the first woman to lead the Seminoles' Athletic Department. The former Seminole basketball player was one of just seven women leading an athletics department among the 124 schools that participated at the FBS level in 2012.



Anna Goorevich,

*Research
assistant in the
Tucker Center*

Anna Goorevich (she/her/hers) is a graduate student pursuing a PhD in Kinesiology/Sport Sociology at the University of Minnesota, where she also serves as a Research Assistant in the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport. Previously, she was the 2021-2022 US-UK Fulbright Postgraduate Scholar at the University of Stirling in Scotland, UK where she received a master's degree in Sport Management. Goorevich's research interests revolve around the gendering of coaching and sport leadership, gender identity and sport participation, and menstruation and sport. Her previous

research background has involved studies of coaching and gender essentialism, transgender athlete inclusion in sport, coach-athlete relationships surrounding menstruation, and gender inequity in youth soccer programs in the UK.



Dr. Candace Hogue, Assistant Professor
University of Minnesota

Dr. Candace Hogue is an assistant professor of Sport & Exercise Psychology at the University of Minnesota and the Director of UMN's Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology Lab. As an undergraduate she played volleyball at Emory University and later completed her Masters and Doctoral work at the University of Kansas. Early in her career she worked as a coach, personal trainer, and sport skills camp counselor.

For the last decade she has consulted with youth and collegiate coaches and athletes on mental skills training, including how to create a positive and empowering sporting environment. Dr. Hogue strongly believes in the power of sport, particularly for young girls and women, and is passionate about helping all athletes and coaches realize what they are capable of both "on and off the field". In her research she aims to understand how coaches can help athletes have a positive sport experience, develop mental skills, and better manage performance stress. Dr. Hogue is an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action* and serves on the editorial board for the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*.



Dr. Trish Hutchison, Executive Director, Period Education Project, & Co-Founder, Girlology

Trish Hutchison, MD, FAAP is pediatrician, nationally recognized health educator, and author. She is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Period Education Project (PEP), a national non-profit focused on closing knowledge gaps and reducing stigma related to menstrual health by equipping medical students with the knowledge and confidence to deliver menstrual health workshops to youth in community settings. Dr. Trish is also Co-Founder of Girlology, a leading wellness app supporting girls and caregivers with personalized on demand health resources that guide them through puberty and adolescence with confidence. She has authored books for youth on puberty and sexual development. Her most recent publication is a puberty book for EVERY body, published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. She is also a national spokesperson for the AAP. Dr. Trish has over 30 years of clinical practice and currently works in College Health at The College of Charleston. This keeps her up to date on issues that kids face daily, including her own two young adult daughters.



Ericka Jones,

Strategic Planner

/ Diversity, Equity

& Leader and

Yoga/Meditation

Teacher

Ericka Jones is passionate about creating spaces where individuals from all backgrounds feel valued and included. She believes that diversity, equity, and inclusion are not just buzzwords but essential components of a successful, thriving organization and a way for people to thrive. Through her 16+ years of work experience in DEI, she has helped organizations create more equitable and inclusive environments, increasing employee engagement and belongingness.

In addition to her professional work, she is a 500-hour RYT yoga teacher and teaches meditation. Ericka is dedicated to her own personal growth and development through the practices of yoga, meditation, and emotional intelligence programs. She founded Yoga Coalition to empower yoga studios to create more representation and increase belonging and equity by offering training modules, workshops, and programs. She strives to create an environment where everyone feels welcome and represented in yoga spaces through this initiative.

Ericka is actively involved in her local community. She volunteers with various non-profit organizations and mentors young women in leadership development programs. She is passionate about giving back and creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

Sarah M. Kaja, PhD is an Assistant Professor in the University of Minnesota Department of Pediatrics. A graduate of the University of Minnesota School of Kinesiology, Sarah's research involves optimizing the contributions of sport and physical activity to young people's development. She is particularly interested in how sport and physical activity environments can support children and adolescents' social connectedness and psychological well-being. Sarah conducts stakeholder-informed observational and intervention research with populations facing concomitant disparities in sport, physical activity, and mental health, and she is focused on getting young people the support for well-being they deserve. Sarah's work has been supported by The Williams Institute at



Dr. Sarah M.

Kaja, Assistant Professor, University of Minnesota

UCLA and the Women's Sports Foundation, Children's Minnesota, and the University of Minnesota Clinical and Translational Science Institute.



Dr. Nicole M.

LaVoi, Director, Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Dr. Nicole M. LaVoi is the Director of the [Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport](#) and a Senior Lecturer in the School of Kinesiology at the University of Minnesota. LaVoi and the Tucker Team plan and host the Women Coaches Symposium. Through action-oriented collaborative research, she translates data and answers critical questions that can make a difference in the lives of girls and women. As a leading scholar on gender, leadership and women coaches, Dr. LaVoi has published 100+ book chapters, research reports and peer-reviewed articles in top-rated journals. Her Outstanding Academic Title award-winning book [Women in Sports Coaching](#), the annual [Women in College Coaching Report Card™](#) and Emmy-nominated documentary [GAME ON: Women Can Coach](#) help inform countless stakeholders who changing the system for women sport coaches. She is the Product Manager of [Coaching HER®](#), and co-creator of [Body Confident Sport](#), free tools to upskill coaches to more effectively coach girls. As a public scholar she consults with a variety of stakeholder groups, works with industry partners, speaks around the world, fields media requests, provides thought leadership, and serves on mission-driven advisory boards such as her third term on the Gatorade Women's Advisory Board. She is an award-winning athlete, coach, scholar, and distinguished teacher, 2013 regional Emmy winner for [Best Sport Documentary](#), two-time Hall of Fame inductee and was named a 2023 USTA Champion of Equality. LaVoi played collegiate tennis at Gustavus Adolphus College winning a NCAA-III National Team Championship

where she currently serves on the Board of Trustees. Prior to her career in higher education, she was a USPTA Teaching Pro and head tennis coach at Wellesley College. In her free time, she enjoys being outdoors, biking, hiking, golf, painting and soaking up the sun.



Becky Maines,
*Head Women's
Soccer Coach, St.
Olaf College*

Becky Maines is in her second season as the head coach of the St. Olaf women's soccer program in 2023-24 after being named the program's eighth head coach on June 30, 2022. A former NCAA Division II student-athlete at Erskine College, Maines came to St. Olaf with 17 years of coaching experience at the NCAA Division I level, most recently as the assistant coach at the University of Minnesota from 2018-21. She has also previously worked at Ole Miss, Tennessee Tech, and Auburn, as well as her alma mater.

All told, Maines coached seven All-Americans, four conference Offensive or Defensive Players of the Year, four College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) Academic All-Americans, 26 all-conference honorees, three National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) draft picks, and 68 conference academic honor roll honorees during her time at the NCAA Division I level. The teams she has coached have made seven NCAA Tournament appearances, won five conference championships, and earned 12 United Soccer Coaches Academic Awards. During her playing days, Maines was a two-time team captain and two-time Carolinas-Virginia Athletics Conference (CVAC) All-Tournament Team member at Erskine, where she helped lead the team to its first conference title by scoring the game-winning goal in the championship game. She graduated from Erskine with a bachelor's degree in physical education, went on to earn a master's degree in health and physical education from Tennessee Tech, and was inducted into the Erskine Athletic Hall of Fame in 2015.



Dr. Emily Matheson is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR), and the Clinical and Project Specialist at EVERYBODY Consulting. In both roles, Emily works closely with community and industry partners to develop, evaluate and launch evidence-based mental health and well-being initiatives. In her

Dr. Emily

Matheson,

*Senior Research
Fellow, Centre for
Appearance
Research*

research role at CAR, Emily leads global body image projects, with expertise in creating and evaluating interventions for digital and sporting contexts. She is currently the principal investigator on a large-scale, international project that aims to develop positive body image interventions for sport environments, with a specific focus on girl-identifying athletes and their coaches. In her role at EVERYBODY Consulting, Emily helps world leading brands and organizations with their impact journey, by helping them to develop and embed evidence-based mental health and wellbeing practices into their businesses.



Kaitlyn Pscodna earned her degree in Dietetics from Michigan State University and completed her dietetic internship at the University of Minnesota – The Emily Program. Kaitlyn owns her own private practice, serves as the sports dietitian for Track and Field, Cross Country and Gymnastics at the University of Minnesota and is the campus dietitian for the students at St. Catherine University. Kaitlyn is also finishing up her Master of Social Work at the University of Michigan.

Kaitlyn Pscodna,

*RDN / Sports
Dietitian*

Dr. Ayanna Rakhu is originally from St. Louis, Missouri, and has worked in the field of aquatics for over 20 years. After learning to swim and swimming competitively in her youth, she began her aquatic career as a lifeguard at age 16. Over the years, she has held various instructor, supervisor, and administrative roles in aquatic programs.

Dr. Rakhu earned a Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training from McKendree University and a Masters of Science in Kinesiology with an emphasis in Sport Psychology from the University of Minnesota. She completed her Ph.D. in Kinesiology (University of Minnesota) with an emphasis in Behavioral Aspects of Physical Activity. She is also the founder of Sankofa Swim International, a company that specializes in developing culturally specific aquatic programs for schools, community organizations, and aquatic facilities, as well as personalized aquatic training for athletes, military, and first responders.



Dr. Ayanna

Rakhu,

*Founder/CEO of
Sankofa Swim
International*

Dr. Rakhu is an avid swimmer, USA Swimming coach, and scuba diver, who is passionate about increasing aquatic engagement in culturally diverse communities across the African diaspora.



Donna Ricks,

*Women's Cross
Country/Track &
Field Head
Coach, Carleton
College*

Donna Ricks starting coaching at Carleton in 1993 and serves as professor of physical education, athletics and recreation, as well as head coach for the women's cross country and track & field programs. She was inducted into the U.S. Track & Field/Cross Country Coaches Association Hall of Fame on Dec. 12, 2023, becoming only the 20th female coach to be enshrined by the USTFCCCA. Over the years, she transformed the Knights' cross country program into a perennial contender at the conference, regional, and national levels. Under her guidance, Carleton has won 12 MIAC crowns, seven regional titles, and made 20 appearances at the NCAA DIII Cross Country Championships. The team's breakthrough came in 2022, with a historic fourth-place finish and their first-ever podium appearance at the national championships. Ricks and the Knights improved on that placement in 2023 as they won the closest 1-4 finish in NCAA D-III Women's Cross Country Championships history.

It was the first NCAA women's team title in school history, and Ricks was selected as the 2023 USTFCCCA Division III Women's Cross Country Coach of the Year. In track & field, the Knights have excelled at the individual level under Ricks' tutelage, winning seven individual NCAA titles across six events: 100-meter dash, 400-meter hurdles, discus,

javelin, pentathlon, and heptathlon. During Ricks' time at Carleton, the Knights have earned more than 70 All-America honors in cross country, indoor track & field and outdoor track & field, with a majority of those coming from outdoor competitions. Ricks has been named USTFCCA Regional Coach of the Year nine times since 2009. She became only the second female coach in NCAA D-III award history to win three consecutive cross country honors, doing so from 2017 to 2019. Additionally, Carleton has received the All-Academic Team Award every year since the program began in 1993.



Renee Saunders,
*Teacher/Volleyball
Coach/Asst.
Activities Director
- Skutt Catholic
High School*

Renee Saunders is one of the best Nebraska high school athletes and coaches in the state's history. Saunders was a two-sport standout in basketball and volleyball, being named the Female Athlete of the Year in Nebraska after her senior year by the Omaha World-Herald and Lincoln Journal Star. Saunders attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, splitting her time between the Huskers' basketball and volleyball teams. The Omaha native helped Nebraska Volleyball win its first national championship in program history as a freshman in 1995. After her playing career, Saunders moved into coaching where she's excelled for over two decades. Following a nine-year stint with the Omaha South volleyball team, Saunders became the head coach at Skutt Catholic where she's transformed the Skyhawks into one of the premier volleyball programs in the country. Skutt has won a state record nine consecutive Class B Volleyball State titles starting in 2015.

Saunders has been named the National Coach of the Year by the AVCA, VolleyballMag, Athletico and MaxPreps. She has also been named Nebraska Coach of the Year by the Omaha World Herald and Lincoln Journal Star, the first person to win the award as a player and as a coach.



Mara Schanfield is an educator, consultant, and coach. She is committed to improving the conditions for learning and development through relationship-building and physical well-being. Through her business, SELECT Coaching, she helps youth-serving organizations embed social and emotional learning strategies and sport-for-development approaches into their youth programs to promote healthy

Mara

Schanfield,

Principal

Consultant,

SELECT Coaching

environments and inclusive relationships. She has coached soccer and basketball from U6 to U18. As a high school basketball coach, she was named Coach of the Year for the Massachusetts Charter School Athletic League twice. In 2023, she was inducted into the Tufts Athletics Hall of Fame along with her teammates from the 2000 Tufts University Women's Soccer team, the first NCAA soccer finalists in school history. Schanfield holds a K-12 School Counselor license in Minnesota and earned a Master of Education in Prevention Science and Practice along with a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in Counseling from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



Katie Steele,

LMFT, *Founder,*

Athletes Mental

Health

Foundation, &

Co-Founder of

Thrive Mental

Health

Katie Steele, LMFT is a former highly recruited D1 athlete who ran track and cross country for the famed University of Oregon team. After experiencing her own trauma as a college athlete, she dedicated her career to the integration of mental health care in athletics. She is now a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, co-founder of Thrive Mental Health, an outpatient mental health clinic in Bend, Oregon, founder of Athletes Mental Health Foundation, author of *The Price She Pays- Confronting The Hidden Mental Crisis In Women's Sports- from the Schoolyard to the Stadium*, and most importantly a mom to three kids.

No matter the sport, the message to girls and women on the court or field is the same: Be aggressive, but not too aggressive. Win at all costs, but be polite while doing it. Get strong, but not too big. Female athletes have long been conditioned to perform under these standards, gracefully and without complaints. Through research and stories of coaches, parents, and female athletes of all ages and ability levels, *The Price She Pays* will illuminate where we are going wrong—and how we can correct course.