

USA Deaf Basketball Endorses Brighton Declaration on Women and Sports

By Joey Baer, USADB Public Relations Director

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From L to R: Laura Edwards, 2013 Deaflympics Women head coach; Shirley Platt, USADB Commissioner; Dr. Becky Clark, USADSF board member

On April 6, 2013, immediately following the USA Deaf Basketball (USADB) women's national championship game between Arizona Black Widows and Deaf Sports Academy Stars, USADB officially adopted the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sports in a ceremonial signing event at Competitive Edge Sports in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

The Brighton Declaration was a result of the first International Conference on Women and Sport, which brought together policy and decision makers in sport at both the national and international level. It was organized by the British Sports Council and supported by the International Olympic Committee and held in 1994 in Brighton, U.K. The declaration was created with an aim at developing a sporting culture that enables and values the full involvement of women in every aspect of sport.

Since USADB took over governance of the sport of basketball from the American Athletic Association for the Deaf (AAAD) currently known as USA Deaf Sports Federation (USADSF) in 1999, there has been growth in the numbers of deaf women athletes, coaches, referees and administrators. In 2009, Ms. Shirley Platt was

elected as USADB's first women commissioner in 65 years. Ms. Christina Costello was elected as the first woman Deputy Commissioner in 2012. Without a doubt the larger roles of women has made the USADB executive board more committed and motivated towards making gender equality a top priority within the organization.

"We look forward to a bright future for our young deaf girls and women. With the Brighton Declaration endorsement, USADB takes the lead in our commitment to providing equal opportunities for deaf girls and women in all areas of deaf sports in America. I also believe that gender equality is no longer an option, without question, it is the right thing to do," said USADB Commissioner Platt.

Plans are in the works to increase the number and quality of women's competition. Along with 8 regions affiliated with USADB, our agenda is to work together to increase the number of women's teams participating on region and national levels. In fact, two regions are currently working together to have a joint tournament in order to bring more women teams to its region tournament. Most importantly, USADB will also strive to increase the number of youth (high-school) camps for girls.

"I am honored and proud to bear witness to USA Deaf Basketball's formal adoption of the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sports," said Dr. Becky Clark, co-chair of the WomenSport International Task Force on Deaf/HOH Girls and Women in Sport and USADSF executive board member-at-large. "USADB has a rich history of providing equal opportunities for deaf girls and women in their programs including women serving in leadership positions. By endorsing the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport, USADB reaffirms its commitment to gender equality and leads the way for full involvement for girls and women at all levels of its organization."

USADB plans to improve and strengthen its outreach programs and services for deaf and hard of hearing females. Two areas specifically targeted are 1) recruiting and training deaf women for leadership positions, and 2) increasing education, training and development of young deaf girls to achieve their fullest potential on and off the basketball court.

We are very pleased to be counted among the 340 organizations globally who have signed the Brighton Declaration and joined with the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG) (<http://www.iwg-gti.org/brighton-signatories/>) in promoting gender equality for women in sport.

For more information on USADB, go to www.usadb.us or www.facebook.com/USADB



Shirley Platt, USADB Commissioner, officially signed the document.



Dr. Becky Clark
USADSF Board member



Laura Edwards
2013 Deaflympics Women Head Coach

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