



WHAT IS THE HARDEST JOB IN SPORTS?

By Kerry Schmidt 03-27-2005

A year or two ago, USA/TODAY, like it seems to do once a year, comes up with a list on best, worst, hardest and assorted other aspects of sports. So do other groups or media outlets.

Most of the time, I think the folks who put these things together have been spending way too much time with Ricky Williams, since many of their choices were hazy.

No, I'm not going to give you another boring list, but I have some food for thought. The "Sweet 16" has been going on since Thursday, and by tonight, we'll have the final four.

Now the men's tournament gets the lion's share of the news, but the women's has grown in strength and, to me, is more interesting in some ways than the men's. And since I live in Louisiana, and the LSU women's team is ranked No.1, we get front row seats.

As such, I have a choice for one of the hardest jobs in sports. I'm not saying the worst, just perhaps the hardest.

My pick would be the many announcers, both those employed by the schools themselves and all the others that broadcast these women's games live.

Many of you may think this would be a dream job, but let's look at this. The hard part is you have to learn, basically, if not a new language, certainly a new vocabulary.

Like the old Dragnet TV show, to protect the innocent, we just use first names, and therein lies the difficulty.

In order to write this "hard to pronounce" list, the names had to start my spell checker smoking (see Ricky Williams).

Alcorn State had Tronealyer and Precious and Sheets. No further comment.

Baylor had Abioula and Shamika. Simple stuff.

Choppin State had Shaunitta, Denitta, Talia, Roshida, Roniecee and Lakeshea

Eastern Kentucky has Fatai Hab'api' Opi (first name only), Louistoo, India –easy one, Tamika and Kiejoun.

Florida State fields Ganiyat, La Quinta (the hotel where they stay when on the road), Roneeka and Shantee.

Houston's announcers must deal with Sancheao, Tamalg, Jockeicie, Cynecia and Klemona.

Imagine describing a fast break at Louisiana Tech. "Tashia steals the outlet pass, gives it to Tosha, over to Aarica, cross-court to Nastassja, lob pass to Lakiste who lays it in!"

Since LSU may be around awhile, barring a big upset, get used to Khalilah, Rashanta, Scholanda, Siemone and Wendlyn.

Old dominion gives us Shareese, Lawona, Sherida, Shahida, and Shantel.

With Penn. State and Purdue, you get the "A" list – at the end: Romana, Kawela, Tanisha, Lakisha and Sharika. Rutgers held a festival with Essence, Charrisa-Tudy, Maatee, Chelisa, Metjiota and Aquisha. Sounds like what you do to bugs.

Western Carolina and Virginia had their own "A" lists, with La Tanya, Takisha, Denesha, Sigita, Teyawna, and Shakeita. On their non A-list were Ki Ki, Shede and Chevon.



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

I don't know if the letter "A" pertains to their grades, but since it is so prominent, let's introduce Eshaya and Markishea from Southern California and Eziamaka and Azela from rival Stanford.

Heck, let's just finish up the honor roll "A's." From various schools you have Sandora, Khadija, Kamesha, Tameeka, Erneisha, Anissa, Tawanna, Tabitha, Alesheia, Aja, Sakima, Wanisha, Katia and furniture lady, Ikea. Whew! I need a breather.

OK, more A-Teamers. Since Tennessee may go deep into the tournament, get used to Shyra and Tye'sha. Also on the Vols is Sa'de. No relation to Marquee.

Vanderbilt has one young lady they will always love, Cherish, and Georgia has Desire. The Stetson Hatters (yes, that's their mascot name) have a lass who, I think, was named after an Egyptian princess, Nefertiti.

Back to the A ladies. Fatima, Wanisha, Janesa, Tasha, Jenessa, Reicina, Naytanda, Kendra, Rimka (plays around the rim), Valeryia, Yuliya, Tatjana, Kalika, Anesia, Myisha, Lakisa, La Tanya, La'Tangela, Laydrilla, Kenya (she's from Alaska) Kaela, De'unna, Saona, STOP, STOP! Migraine.

Let's ease up on the A's, although that limits the rosters.

Che'oh, from Arizona. MK-LaFave, Rashidat-Sadig and Chardee-Houste make up the hyphen team.

Kansas State is a bit thin with Twiggy.

Now to some of the more common names. Egle, Nee Nee, C'vette (a fast car?), Tasi, (my darling) Armintine, Tamara Jo, Khadijah, Tulyah, Breona, Kedzie (you not), Yadili, Eshombi, (March) Maudess, Yasemin, Jazlyn, Chante – wait, break time again. Where's my Visine?

Back to work. Sebnem, T'Nae, Sandora ('s box). Tossinay, Sha'Rea, (way down upon the) Leshawnae (river), Yadili, Eshombi (Lord, did I mention her already?) and, last but not least, Kondesnazi (nice dresser).

Going back and proofing this, there are 11 names that did not trip the spell-checker, so maybe they don't belong here.

And, it is quite possible that I may have mentioned one or two names twice, but if so, though! My editors get the big bucks to check all this, so I'll give them that job. My eye balls are glazed over. Looks like I've been puffing along with Ricky.

Again, I don't know if announcing/pronouncing all of these name in rapid succession is the hardest job in sports, but it can't be easy. If I were to add the last names, they would be much easier on the eyes, but boring, and many are redundant. Besides, my men's ALL-NAME team will be out in a couple of weeks, and there you get first and last.

Regardless, my spell checker is now check mated and my right index finger has a blister from hitting the "ignore" button a thousand times, so I'm off to watch – AND LISTEN to some of the games and see how the announcers handle these wonderful student-athletes. For the ladies, an LSU – Tennessee rematch in the finals would be wonderful. Especially with LSU having Pokey as their coach, trying to lead the Lady Tigers over the (Pat) Summett.