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## IWU Women's Coach Mia Smith on being Selected as a USA Basketball Representative

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WGLT Sound Ideas Interview with Mia Smith, May 22, 2017

Jon Norton: So, this is pretty exciting.

Mia Smith: It is very exciting. I'm actually – kind of nervous and a little apprehensive. I'm jumping in midstream – part of the reason for being on the committee is that when coaches move to division 1, and division 1 is not allowed to be on the committees to select. They can coach but they cannot select, so when there were some restructuring of teams and some coaches went division 1, they needed a fill in and I was chosen to do that.

Jon Norton: So... they can't be on the selection committee because they're mainly choosing division 1 basketball players?

Mia Smith: That – they believe that it gives them an advantage if they're able to select and look at the players that the United States has selected to be on the Olympic team. So therefore, division ones can coach but they cannot select. They can't be at the viewing. They- actually they can be at the viewing of trials, however, at Colorado because of space limitations they're not allowed to be there.

Jon Norton: Okay. How do you, or how does one gets selected to be on this committee?

Mia Smith: I have no idea to be honest--

Jon Norton: --Really?

Mia Smith: I believe that they probably--

Jon Norton: --So it's not something you lobby for. It's – you just get selected.

Mia Smith: Yours – I was selected. I was given a call by Carol Carron, who is the director of USA Women's Basketball and she called and said, "We have a vacancy. We'd like for you to fill it. Are you able to do so?" and immediately I said "Yes."

Jon Norton: That was – did it come out of the blue.

Mia Smith: Out of – totally out of the blue. Had in a call from her that I wasn't able to accept and then saw the email and immediately called her back.

Jon Norton: Were you excited?

Mia Smith: Very excited, and still I – like I said, I've got butterflies – still to this day, it's – it's almost as exciting for me to serve on this committee as it was to accept my position at Wesleyan 20 years ago.

Jon Norton: We could say you're gonna be fairly busy because when this is go – is this going on the summer only or . . .

Mia Smith: . . . I'll be done with my part of my things at the beginning of June. You know, we have a list right now of a hundred and fifty – hundred and fifty five girls – out of those, they were thirty five worse selected. They were done by invitation – and then there's an applicant pool and out of the applicant pool, they select the remaining one-hundred and five, I believe, and then we work with the one hundred and fifty to one hundred and fifty five number. But there were invitations sent out to a select few – all of those that were invited did accept and then there's an applicant pool. A lot of AAU coaches have emphasis on this with their players- if they think they're good enough, they ask them to apply. And I missed all of that because that was being done by the person that I replaced.

Jon Norton: This developmental team- is it expected that the kids on the 16 and under team will eventually move up to the 18 and under team?

Mia Smith: That's the hope--

Jon Norton: Okay.

Mia Smith: -- the hope is that you develop a feeder program, but there have been kids that have been added and changed and injuries etc., things like that.

Jon Norton: How political is this? Or is it neither? Is there things set up to keep it as apolitical as possible?

Mia Smith: I believe so. The- that was one of my concerns – is, do we have a numerical radiant system? Do we have things that we're looking specifically for? And all of those things were taken care of prior to my – getting on the committee. So, you know, would've been interested in those, but now I have a list of a hundred and fifty girls and we'll go in. they will be put through drills; they'll be put through scrimmages and we already took a look at some of the intangible – some of the things that really stand out and you're going to have to be a team player and stand out, and that's kinda hard to do. We'll be looking at specifics like – by position – who are the best point guards, who are the best shooting guards, who's our best post player, who is the best post player with range – we'll be looking at things like that. And I'll actually be coming in a day late so I had a prior commitment that I could not get out of.

Jon Norton: How – how important are the intangibles and how do you measure that?

Mia Smith: And that may be one of the reasons why they select the division 3 person, I think – to sit on this – you know, I'm kind of central located. I mean, I'm mecca of girls' basketball from Chicago to St. Louis to Indianapolis to \_\_\_\_\_. That's a hot bed of where some of the best talent is. So I'm a little bit familiar with being able to distinguish what is a division 1 player – are there any twinners between and division 3 that we can look at, and I have a feeling that maybe that's gonna be part of my role is – what are some of the intangibles because you'll look for who is a great team player, first of all. How do they handle themselves? Do they' what type of emotions are they handling Are they rebounding right after a mistake or are they letting that mistake dwell within them and it's holding them back – holding their team back. It'll be all those types of things that I think I'll be looking for.

Jon Norton: This is WGLT South Ideas. I'm Jon Norton talking with Illinois Wesleyan University Women's Basketball coach Mia Smith who has just been selected as Service and At large Representative on the National USA Basketball Committee to select coaches and athletes for various USA Basketball teams for the upcoming quadranium. That's quite a mouthful.

Mia Smith: It is a mouthful and – and the quadranium refers to the amount of teams that are out there and available like, so the women's basketball team, the 23 and under team, 16 and under team, and the 12 and under team.

Jon Norton: Since you've never done this, is this a role that you're expected to be mentored for or is this something you are expected to be bringing your expertise in right now.

Mia Smith: I think it's combination of both. I believe, the people that are on the committee – they're great choices, first of all. I'm – I knew three of the seven, which I thought was really unique and I thought all three of those people do a great job. And it'll be interesting, you know, I'll serve on this committee until I either move through the committees or move up or move to different positions or until I retire or until I can't do it anymore. It's once you're in - you're in. As long as you're doing your job and, I'm really excited about that. Just--

Jon Norton: -- It's quite an honor.

Mia Smith: Yeah. Just a chance to – to see one hundred and fifty of the best girls players that are 16 and under. They're gonna be- you know, we're gonna – potentially look at US Olympians.

Jon Norton: As a Division-3 basketball coach, these are not kids probably that are gonna be Titans any time soon, right?

Mia Smith: I definitely doubt that, but you never know --

Jon Norton: -- you never know. Okay. All right. So – and you get to see different – different things that way. What do you think you bring to the table? I know what you said what year, maybe expected to bring – what do you think you're bringing that you're seeing early on?

Mia Smith: You know, every coach has their style of play. My style of play that I prefer – that my team should utilize is speed and athleticism. And I think, hopefully I'll be able to notice the girls that have some quickness and the ability to remain quick for the next few years and who can maybe play in multiple positions, because I think the versatile athlete is gonna have the best opportunity at making this team and by versatile I mean – can you handle the ball against pressure? Can you rebound against the vig? Can you shoot? Can you drive? And that takes athleticism and I think that's what I'll be able to bring to the table the most because that is what represents my team at Illinios Wesleyan.

Jon Norton: Illinois Wesleyan University Women's Basketball coach Mia Smith, thanks for joining us.

Mia Smith: I was so excited to be here and thank you for the opportunity.

Jon Norton: Congratulations for the opportunity to you. I'll be at USA Basketball selection.

Mia Smith: I appreciate that. Thank you.

Jon Norton: Yeah.