

The Battalion Sports

April 21, 1982 Page 15

AIAW near close of fruitful 11-year existence

Editor's note: This is the first of two-part series recapping the events that have led to the downfall of the AIAW, the organization that for 10 years, has set standards for college women's athletics. The first segment deals with the past year's deteriorating relationship between the AIAW and the NCAA.



Kay Don

by Frank L. Christlieb
Sports Editor

When the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women began its inaugural session during 1971-72, more than 80 schools took what promised to be a revolutionary step in the history of college women's athletics.

But after swelling to an excess of 1,000 member schools, the AIAW now finds itself on the brink of non-existence. In fact, the organization's life processes are so close to extinction that it's difficult to detect even a faint pulse among the 700 AIAW member schools.

Death will strike the AIAW June 30. After that date, all Texas A&M University women's athletic teams which have competed within the AIAW will begin participating in the NCAA.

Camden also said that at some industries are recovering very much from the recession. And companies involved in industries as petroleum, banking, food services, tobacco, aerospace, general communications and other choices for places.

He also said that in business areas — manufacturing, health care, software, high technology, electronics, and other industries will be the wing job market withers, followed by the rest of business.

women's intercollegiate athletics through opposition to inclusion of intercollegiate athletic programs in the coverage of Title IX.

The Title IX legislation, although a part of the Education Amendments of 1972, did not take effect until July 1975. The federal law states that:

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

The AIAW suit stated that the results of the NCAA's increased control over women's athletics would be "to diminish program opportunities for women in athletics; to diminish leadership opportunities for women in athletics; and to eliminate the separate identity and governance of the women's intercollegiate athletics market now expressed through AIAW."

Kay Don, Texas A&M assistant athletic director for women and Region IV representative of the AIAW, says the feud between the two factions has reached its peak and essentially all that's left are the final stages of the AIAW's dissolution. In an interview Tuesday, Don described each part of the losing battle the women's organization has fought since the NCAA began its attempt to swing AIAW members toward its older, more solidified structure.

For the AIAW, the beginning of the end took place at the 1981 NCAA convention.

"At the NCAA convention last year, it was voted by the assembly to initiate women's championships at the Division I level," Don said. "The year before, they had already initiated championships for Division II and Division III to become effective, so all they had left was to try to get Division I approved."

"Also, it was approved that (the NCAA) adopt a governance structure to include women into its committees and council in various areas of control."

Don said, however, that AIAW members didn't take unified stand on this action.

"I don't know if it'd be a 50-50, but there was pretty much a split within the women's organization as to whether this (initiating the women's championships) was really the best move for women's athletics," Don said. "Some people felt that it was, that it would possibly mean more money coming into the programs. Some felt that it would give more visibility to the women's athletic programs because of the NCAA's power within the television ranks as well as other media."

"On the other side, there were a number of women who felt that it was not good ... that a number of women's positions would be removed or done away with at the university levels ... (and) that within the NCAA structure itself, they were not allowing for equal representation on the committees. They were just allowing for percentages of women coming onto the committees, and this would stifle the growth of women in the area of athletics to ever be able to develop their administrative skills."

"Also, there was a feeling that women's athletics within the NCAA would take the same place as what we have found, in past years, other men's sports have taken," Don said, "because it has appeared over the years that NCAA's rules and legislation have been made for football and basketball."

"For example, scholarships. You have a fewer number of scholarships allowed in various sports, because they view some of the men's sports in a little bit different light than football and basketball. Those are the

money-producers, the money-makers in most cases, whereas tennis, swimming, golf and track

the women's programs, because they are not money-makers at this point in time," Don said.

Don said many AIAW members also felt that some NCAA rules might harm the state of intercollegiate women's athletics. established. The women's programs are still in a growth stage, and if that growth is stifled right now, then you don't know what might happen."

With most of the money in the AIAW coming from membership dues, Don said, it began to appear that a move by major schools into the NCAA would dearly cost the women's organization.

"Division I schools pay the larger membership dues," she said. "If (the AIAW) lost a large number of Division I schools, this would take about 50 percent of its money away. It was like a domino effect, actually. What was happening is that those companies who had been backing AIAW were starting to say 'Well, if the better teams in the AIAW are going to swing over to

the NCAA, then your championships might not be the same quality, so we're going to start pulling our support away from this."

Don said that the AIAW soon began to wise up to the NCAA's plan to monopolize college women's athletics.

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