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# Head Coaches of Women's Collegiate Teams

A Report on Select NCAA  
Division-I Institutions  
2019-2020

  
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**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA**  
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# Head Coaches of Women's Collegiate Teams

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## A REPORT ON SELECT SEVEN NCAA DIVISION-I

### CONFERENCES AND INSTITUTIONS

2019-20

This longitudinal research series, now in its eighth year (2012-2020), is a partnership between the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport at the University of Minnesota—the first research center of its kind in the world—and WeCOACH, the premier organization dedicated to the recruitment, advancement, and retention of women coaches of all sports at all levels. In this longitudinal research series, we assign a grade to each institution, sport, and conference based on the percentage of women head coaches of women's teams.

### Purpose

The purpose of this research series is multifaceted: 1) to document and benchmark the percentage of women coaches of women's teams in college athletics; 2) to provide evidence that will help recruit and retain and thereby increase the percentage of women who are in the coaching profession; 3) to track the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at increasing the percentage of women in coaching; and 4) to bring awareness while providing an evidence-based starting point for a national discussion on this important issue. In this report we answer the following research questions: 1) *What percentage of women occupy head coach positions for women's sport teams in 86 select "big time" NCAA D-I athletics programs during the 2019-20 academic year?* 2) *How, and/or if, are the data changing over time?*

### Methodology

#### CALCULATION OF GRADE CRITERIA AND GRADE SCALE

Developing a report card grading scale to accurately reflect the percentage of women coaches for women's teams is a difficult—and potentially controversial—assignment given the context of female under-representation at many institutions. With careful thought we developed a defensible system. The mean percentage of female head coaches for all schools is ~40%—the midpoint of the data—which represents average achievement (i.e., a C grade). This mean was used to construct the grading system. For a full explanation of our grading scale and how it was constructed, visit our website [Research Tab > Current Research > Women in Sport](#)

Coaching. **The scale used to assign grades is as follows: A = 70-100%, B = 55-69%, C = 40-54%, D = 25-39%, F = 0-24% of women head coaches of women's teams.** If rounding up the decimal resulted in moving up a grade level, the institution, sport, or conference was placed in the higher grade bracket. Institutions with the same female head coach percentage are ordered alphabetically.

## SAMPLE

The 2019-20 dataset included all head coaches of women's teams ( $N = 970$ ) at 86 institutions of higher education in all geographic regions of the United States that were current members of seven select NCAA Division-I "big time" conferences: American Athletic Conference (AAC), Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), Big 12, Big East, Big Ten, Pacific-12 (Pac-12), and Southeastern Conference (SEC). Appendix A summarizes the distribution of schools by conference for 2019-20. IN 2019-20, Clemson added softball, Oregon State cut swimming and Pitt cut tennis. Cal added and Utah retired a co-head gymnastics coach.

## Results

### TOTAL HEAD COACHES

A total of 970 head coaches of women's teams from 86 institutions, **with an average age of 46.4 years (range 24-80 years old)**, comprised this sample. The percentage of women head coaches increased for the seventh year in a row, to 42.3% which was a slight (0.5%) improvement from 2018-19 (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN HEAD COACHES OF WOMEN'S TEAMS BY YEAR

Position	Schools	Female		Male		Total Coaches
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	<i>N</i>
2012-13 Head Coaches	76	40.2	356	59.8	530	886
2013-14 Head Coaches	76	39.6	352	60.4	536	888
2014-15 Head Coaches	86	40.2	390	59.8	579	969
2015-16 Head Coaches	86	41.1	397	58.9	570	967
2016-17 Head Coaches	86	41.2	397	58.8	567	964
2017-18 Head Coaches	86	41.6	404	58.4	566	970
2018-19 Head Coaches	86	41.8	406	58.2	565	971
2019-20 Head Coaches	86	42.3	410	57.7	560	970

### HEAD COACH TURNOVER

Coach turnover is a target of opportunity to hire a woman. In the 2019-20 academic year, 102 out of 970 (10.5%) head coaches turned over. In Table 2, the gender composition of the former coach-new coach hire dyad is summarized (e.g., if a male coach was replaced by a female, that was coded as male-female). In over half of all vacant positions (55 of 102, 53.9%) a male was hired, resulting in 47 missed targets of opportunity to hire a woman. More than half of the institutions (49 of 86, 57%) had head coach turnover, ranging from one to seven

positions. In summary, many insitutions, and by institutions we mean Athletic Directors, failed to capitalize on coach turnover and utilize it as a target of opportunity to hire women.

TABLE 2. GENDER COMPOSITION OF HEAD COACH VACANCY HIRES FROM 2018-19 TO 2019-20

Former Coach-New Coach Gender Dyad	Frequency	Percentage
Male-Male	38	37.3
Female-Female	22	21.6
Male-Female	25	24.5
Female-Male	17	16.7
TOTAL	102	100

## BY SPORT

The percentage of women head coaches in 23 NCAA-sponsored sports varied greatly (see Table 3). Alpine skiing sustained all male coaches for the seventh year in a row. In sports with a high coach turnover (see Table 4) such as cross country (13 of 17, 76%) and track & field (7 of 10, 70%) a majority of vacant head coaching positions were filled by men. Furthermore, these sports with F grades, where the director oversees the men's and women's programs, including swimming (3 of 4, 75%) and diving (9 of 9, 100%), show continued trends of filling a majority of head coaching positions with men. These hiring trends reinforce the common, but false, belief that women can't and/or shouldn't coach men or are not qualified to lead co-ed programs. The disparate hiring data sparks the question, *"What are coaching associations doing to support, develop, advance, and retain women coaches?"*

TABLE 3. GRADE BY SPORT FOR PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE HEAD COACHES FOR 2019-20

Grade	%	Sport
A	70-100	field hockey (95.7%), lacrosse (-80%), golf (+78.7%), softball (-76.4%), equestrian (75%)
B	55-69	basketball (+61.6%), gymnastics (58.8%)
C	40-54	nordic skiing (50%), rifle (50%), rowing (+48.7%), tennis (+45.9%), volleyball (↑ 41.7%)
D	25-39	bowling (33.3%), soccer (+28.2%), ice hockey (25%), water polo (↑ 25%)
F	0-24	beach volleyball (↓ 20%), fencing (18.2%), cross country (-17.4%), track & field (+15.7%), swimming (-12.7%), diving (-5.2%), alpine skiing (0%), triathlon (0%)

↓ Sport decreased percentage of women head coaches and moved down a grade from 2015-16 to 2016-17

- Sport decreased percentage of women head coaches, but did not move down a grade

+ Sport increased percentage of women head coaches, but did not move up a grade

↑ Sport increased percentage of women head coaches and moved up a grade

**TABLE 4. HEAD COACH NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE ALPHABETICALLY BY SPORT, GENDER, AND HIRING DYADS FOR WOMEN'S TEAMS 2019-20**

	Head Coaches					Former Coach-New Coach Gender Dyad Hires				
	Female		Male							
Sport	%	n	%	n	N	male-male	male-female	female-female	female-male	TOTAL HIRES
Basketball	61.6	53	38.4	33	86		2	6		8
Beach Volleyball	20	3	80	12	15	1			1	2
Bowling	33.3	1	66.7	2	3	1				1
Cross Country	17.4	15	82.6	71	86	7	1	3	6	17
Diving	5.2	3	94.8	55	58	8			1	9
Equestrian	75	6	25	2	8					
Fencing	18.2	2	81.8	9	11	1				1
Field Hockey	95.7	22	4.3	1	23			2		2
Golf	78.7	59	21.3	16	75	1	2	2	1	6
Gymnastics	58.8	20	41.2	14	34		1		1	2
Ice Hockey	25	2	75	6	8					
Lacrosse	80	24	20	6	30			3	1	4
Rifle	50	4	50	4	8			1		1
Rowing	48.7	19	51.3	20	39		2	2		4
Skiing-Alpine	0	0	100	3	3	1				1
Skiing-Nordic	50	1	50	1	2					
Soccer	28.2	24	71.8	61	85	2	3	0	2	7
Softball	76.4	55	23.6	17	72	1	1	2	1	5
Swimming	12.7	8	87.3	55	63	3		1		4
Tennis	45.9	39	54.1	46	85	2	2	2	1	7
Triathlon	0	0	100	1	1					
Track & Field	15.7	13	84.3	70	83	7	2	1		10
Volleyball	41.7	35	58.3	49	84	2	5		2	9
Water Polo	25	2	75	6	8	1	1			2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>57.7</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>102</b>

\* denotes unfilled position in that sport

## BY INSTITUTION

The range for the percentage of women head coaches by institution varied dramatically from the highest (80% Cincinnati) to the lowest (0% Oklahoma State). Table 5 contains the grade assigned to each institution, including which institutions moved up or down a grade level, which institutions increased or decreased in percentage of head female coaches, and how many female and male head coaches are employed at each institution. From 2018-19 to 2019-20, 16 of 86 institutions (18.6%) increased their percentage of female head coaches and realized their target(s) of opportunity. Of those 16 institutions, eight moved up a grade. Thirteen institutions (15.1%) registered a decrease in their percentage of women head coaches. Of those 13, six institutions received a lower grade (See Table 5). A majority (66.2%) of institutions had no change in the percentage of women head coaches. The lack of institutional change can be attributed to three reasons: 1) no coach turnover occurred; 2) a

same-sex individual replaced the outgoing coach (male-male, female-female); or 3) multiple coach hires in the same institution offset each other (e.g., male-female, female-male).

Figure 1 is an infographic that depicts the data visually with school and conference logos by grade, appearing from highest to lowest percentage of women head coaches.

**TABLE 6. DISTRIBUTION OF GRADES BY INSTITUTION FOR PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN HEAD COACHES BY YEAR**

GRADE	A	B	C	D	F	
Grade Criteria %	70-100	55-69	40-54	25-39	0-24	Total
YEAR	n (%)					
2012-13	3 (4.0%)	6 (7.9%)	29 (38.2%)	30 (39.5%)	8 (10.5%)	76 (100%)
2013-14	1 (1.3%)	8 (10.5%)	27 (35.5%)	31 (40.8%)	9 (11.8%)	76 (100%)
2014-15	2 (2.3%)	9 (10.6%)	33 (38.8%)	31 (36.5%)	11 (12.9%)	86 (100%)
2015-16	2 (2.3%)	13 (15.1%)	31 (36.5%)	30 (34.9%)	10 (11.6%)	86 (100%)
2016-17	2 (2.3%)	17 (19.8%)	27 (31.4%)	29 (33.7%)	11 (12.9%)	86 (100%)
2017-18	2 (2.3%)	17 (19.8%)	29 (31.7%)	29 (33.7%)	9 (10.4%)	86 (100%)
2018-19	4 (4.7%)	11 (12.8%)	32 (37.2%)	29 (33.7%)	10 (11.6%)	86 (100%)
2019-20	4 (4.7%)	10 (11.6%)	35 (40.7%)	28 (32.6%)	9 (10.5%)	86 (100%)

Note: n (%): n = number of institutions receiving a grade, % = percent of institutions in sample receiving grade

## BY CONFERENCE

Using the grading criteria, all conferences earned a C or D (see Table 7). The percentage of women head coaches in “The Power Five” conferences (ACC, Big 12, B1G Ten, Pac-12, SEC) was 41.6% down slightly from 2018-19 (-.2%, 41.8%). The number of coaches in each conference by gender and WeCOACH membership is in Table 8.

Forty-two institutions in this NCAA D-I Select 7 sample hold **WeCOACH group memberships** (up from 20 in 2019-20). Table 8 shows the Big 12 and Big East can boast the highest percentage of institutional memberships (100%) as both conferences have conference-wide memberships. See Appendix A, for the forty-two **bolded institutions** which are WeCOACH group members, one indicator of an institutional commitment to valuing, developing, and supporting women coaches.

**TABLE 7. GRADE BY CONFERENCE FOR PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN HEAD COACHES**

Grade	Criteria %	Conference
A	70-100	
B	55-69	
C	40-54	B1G Ten (+49.5%), American (+48.6%), Pac-12 [-43.7%], ACC (43.4%)
D	25-39	Big East (+39.6%), SEC (+37.2%), Big 12 [-28.3%]
F	0-24	

Note: Conference decreased (-) or increased (+) percentage of women head coaches; moved down ↓ or up ↑ a grade from 2018-19 to 2019-20.

TABLE 5. GRADES BY INSTITUTION FOR PERCENT OF WOMEN HEAD COACHES OF WOMEN'S TEAMS

			Female		Male	
School	A-F	Δ	%	n	%	n
Cincinnati	A		80	8	20	2
Central Florida	A		77.8	7	22.2	2
Washington	A		72.7	8	27.3	3
Oklahoma	A		70	7	30	3
Tennessee	B		66.7	8	33.3	4
UC Berkeley	B	-	64.7	11	35.3	6
Minnesota	B		64.3	9	35.7	5
Illinois	B		63.6	7	36.4	4
Miami	B		60	6	40	4
DePaul	B	↑	57.1	4	42.9	3
Clemson	B	↑	55.6	5	44.4	4
Washington State	B		55.6	5	44.4	4
Florida State*	B		54.5	6	45.5	5
SMU*	B	-	54.5	6	45.5	5
Connecticut	C	↑	53.8	7	46.2	6
Georgetown	C		53.8	7	46.2	6
Iowa	C	+	53.8	7	46.2	6
Michigan State	C	+	53.8	7	46.2	6
Michigan	C		53.3	8	46.7	7
Penn State	C	+	53.3	8	46.7	7
Ohio State	C	+	52.9	9	47.1	8
Colorado	C		50	5	50	5
Duke	C		50	7	50	7
Georgia Tech	C		50	4	50	4
NC State	C		50	6	50	6
Northwestern	C		50	6	50	6
Rutgers	C		50	7	50	7
South Florida	C	↓	50	4	50	4
UCLA	C	↓	50	7	50	7
Wake Forest	C		50	4	50	4
LSU	C	↑	46.2	6	53.8	7
Villanova	C		46.2	6	53.8	7
Virginia	C	-	46.2	6	53.8	7
E. Carolina	C	↑	45.5	5	54.5	6
Maryland	C	↓	45.5	5	54.5	6
Temple	C		45.5	5	54.5	6
Mississippi	C		44.4	4	55.6	5
Oregon State	C	-	44.4	4	55.6	5
Seton Hall	C		44.4	4	55.6	5
Stanford	C	-	44.4	8	55.6	10
Marquette	C		42.9	3	57.1	4
Nebraska	C		42.9	6	57.1	8
Florida	C		41.7	5	58.3	7

			Female		Male	
School	A-F	Δ	%	n	%	n
South Carolina	C		41.7	5	58.3	7
TCU	C		41.7	5	58.3	7
Wisconsin	C		41.7	5	58.3	7
North Carolina	C	-	40	6	60	9
Oregon	C		40	4	60	6
Tulane	C		40	4	60	6
Louisville	D		38.5	5	61.5	8
Notre Dame	D		38.5	5	61.5	8
Boston College	D		37.5	6	62.5	10
Mississippi State	D		37.5	3	62.5	5
Texas Tech	D		37.5	3	62.5	5
Xavier	D	+	37.5	3	62.5	5
Arkansas	D	+	36.4	4	63.6	7
Texas A&M	D		36.4	4	63.6	7
Alabama	D	+	33.3	4	66.7	8
Arizona State	D	↓	33.3	5	66.7	10
Auburn	D		33.3	4	66.7	8
Georgia	D		33.3	4	66.7	8
Memphis	D		33.3	3	66.7	6
Pittsburgh	D	+	33.3	3	66.7	6
St. John's	D		33.3	3	66.7	6
Tulsa	D	↑	33.3	3	66.7	6
Indiana	D		30.8	4	69.2	9
Utah	D	-	30.8	4	69.2	9
Purdue	D		30	3	70	7
Butler	D	↑	27.3	3	72.7	8
Kansas	D		27.3	3	72.7	8
Missouri	D		27.3	3	72.7	8
Providence	D		27.3	3	72.7	8
Syracuse	D	↑	27.3	3	72.7	8
Texas	D		27.3	3	72.7	8
Virginia Tech	D		27.3	3	72.7	8
Creighton	D		25	2	75	6
Kansas State	D		25	2	75	6
USC	F	↓	23.1	3	76.9	10
Baylor	F		22.2	2	77.8	7
Vanderbilt	F		22.2	3	77.8	7
Houston	F	↓	20	2	80	8
Iowa State	F		18.2	2	81.8	9
Arizona	F		16.7	2	83.3	10
Kentucky	F		16.7	2	83.3	10
West Virginia	F		9.1	1	90.9	10
Oklahoma State	F		0	0	100	8

- \* Decimal rounded up causing institution to be placed in higher grade level
- ↓ Institution decreased percentage of women head coaches and moved down a grade from 2018-19 to 2019-20
- Institution decreased percentage of women head coaches, but did not move down a grade
- ↑ Institution increased percentage of women head coaches, but did not move up a grade
- ↑ Institution increased percentage of women head coaches and moved up a grade from 2018-19 to 2019-20



**TABLE 8. GRADE, PERCENTAGE, AND NUMBER OF WOMEN HEAD COACHES BY CONFERENCE AND WECOACH INSTITUTIONAL GROUP MEMBERSHIP 2019-20**

Conference	WeCOACH*		Grade	Female Head Coaches		Male Head Coaches		Total Coaches
	n/N	%		%	n	%	n	N
Big 12	10/10	100	D	28.3%	28	71.7%	71	99
Big East	10/10	100	D	39.6%	38	60.4%	58	96
B1G Ten	6/14	42.8	C	49.5%	91	50.5%	93	184
Pac-12	5/12	41.6	C	43.7%	66	56.3%	85	151
ACC	6/15	40	C	43.4%	75	56.6%	98	173
American	3/11	27.3	C	48.6%	54	51.4%	57	111
SEC	2/14	14.2	D	37.2%	58	62.8%	98	156

\*Note: WeCOACH = number of institutional memberships (n)/total institutions in conference (N). % of WeCOACH institutional members within conference

## Summary

The goal of this research is to document the percentage of women collegiate head coaches and data trends over time and add complementary results to the excellent work in this area conducted by our colleagues. Data matters. The numerous and complex barriers women coaches experience are illuminated in the academic literature (for a full review see *Women in Sports Coaching*, edited by LaVoi, 2016) as well as in many other scholarly works and research reports. News reports of the discrimination women college coaches face are all too common. **The occupational landscape for women coaches must change.**

The good news is the data in this eighth report for 86 big-time select NCAA Division-I athletic programs documented a sixth consecutive year of a *small* increase of women head coaches of women's teams over one academic year. While gains or losses by institutions, sports, or conferences were small, the data again this year is headed in the right direction—UP! The bad news is that the percentage of women coaches is stagnant and not increasing in any *statistically significant* way. Change within any major social institution happens slowly and over time, and sport is no exception. However, without data documentation to hold decision makers accountable, create dialogue and awareness, focus collective and collaborative efforts, and provide a roadmap on where to dedicate resources, the small gains would surely be in reverse.

**With data can examine over time, in a particular AD's leadership tenure, if the institutional grade improves, is sustained, or if it declines.**

**Accountability ultimately resides with the AD.**

## CONCLUSION

It is simply not possible that as each new generation of females becomes increasingly involved in and shaped by their sport experience, they simultaneously become less interested, less passionate, and less qualified to enter the coaching profession. *We can do better.*

The data in this report can be used by institutions, athletics administrators, and sport coaching associations to advocate for women coaches, track progress or decline in comparison to peer institutions, evaluate the effectiveness of strategies aimed at increasing the percentage of women coaches, and hold institutions and decision makers accountable in creating a gender-balanced workforce—especially for women’s teams. It can also be used to start and continue discussions and educate and motivate decision makers to think differently about how they recruit, hire, and retain women coaches. To read how this report card series is making an impact and why systems change is needed to address lack of equity for women coaches, visit our website at [TuckerCenter.org](http://TuckerCenter.org).

Together, the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport at the University of Minnesota and WeCOACH—along with other organizations, groups and individuals—are striving to increase the percentage of women college coaches, generate awareness, continue a national dialogue, and recruit, support, and retain women in the coaching profession. Our vision is that more young women (and men) have female coaches as role models and coaching becomes a more gender-balanced profession. Women who aspire to coach should have legitimate opportunities to enter the workforce, experience a supportive, inclusive and positive work climate when they do, and be paid accordingly and fairly for their expertise. Our efforts aspire to the tagline from the Wellesley Centers for Women: “A world that is good for women is good for everyone™.”

To view and download this report and others go to [www.TuckerCenter.org](http://www.TuckerCenter.org)

We also have a full **Game On: Women Can Coach** Tool Kit at [z.umn.edu/5ep1](http://z.umn.edu/5ep1)

## References

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## Appendix A

### CONFERENCE COMPOSITION 2019-20, BOLDDED = WECOACH GROUP MEMBERSHIP

American Athletic Conference (AAC)	Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC)	Big 12	Big East	Big Ten	Pacific-12 (Pac-12)	Southeastern Conference (SEC)
University of Central Florida	Boston College	<b>Baylor University</b>	<b>Butler University</b>	University of Illinois	University of Arizona	<b>University of Alabama</b>
University of Cincinnati	<b>Clemson University</b>	<b>Iowa State University</b>	<b>Creighton University</b>	<b>Indiana University</b>	Arizona State University	University of Arkansas
<b>University of Connecticut</b>	Duke University	<b>University of Kansas</b>	<b>DePaul University</b>	<b>University of Iowa</b>	<b>University of California</b>	Auburn University
East Carolina University	<b>Florida State University</b>	<b>Kansas State University</b>	<b>Georgetown University</b>	University of Maryland	University of California – Los Angeles	<b>University of Florida</b>
University of Houston	Georgia Institute of Technology	<b>University of Oklahoma</b>	<b>Marquette University</b>	University of Michigan	University of Colorado	University of Georgia
University of Memphis	<b>University of Louisville</b>	<b>Oklahoma State University</b>	<b>Providence College</b>	Michigan State University	<b>University of Oregon</b>	University of Kentucky
<b>University of South Florida</b>	University of Miami	<b>University of Texas</b>	<b>Seton Hall University</b>	<b>University of Minnesota</b>	<b>Oregon State University</b>	Louisiana State University
Southern Methodist University	University of North Carolina	<b>Texas Christian University</b>	<b>St. John's University</b>	<b>University of Nebraska</b>	University of Southern California	University of Mississippi
<b>Temple University</b>	North Carolina State University	<b>Texas Tech University</b>	<b>Villanova University</b>	Northwestern University	<b>Stanford University</b>	<b>Mississippi State University</b>
Tulane University	<b>University of Notre Dame</b>	<b>West Virginia University</b>	<b>Xavier University</b>	<b>Ohio State University</b>	<b>University of Utah</b>	University of Missouri
University of Tulsa	University of Pittsburgh			<b>Penn State University</b>	University of Washington	University of South Carolina
	<b>Syracuse University</b>			Purdue University	Washington State University	University of Tennessee
	University of Virginia			Rutgers University		Texas A&M University
	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University			University of Wisconsin		Vanderbilt University
	<b>Wake Forest University</b>					

**bold** = WeCOACH institutional membership

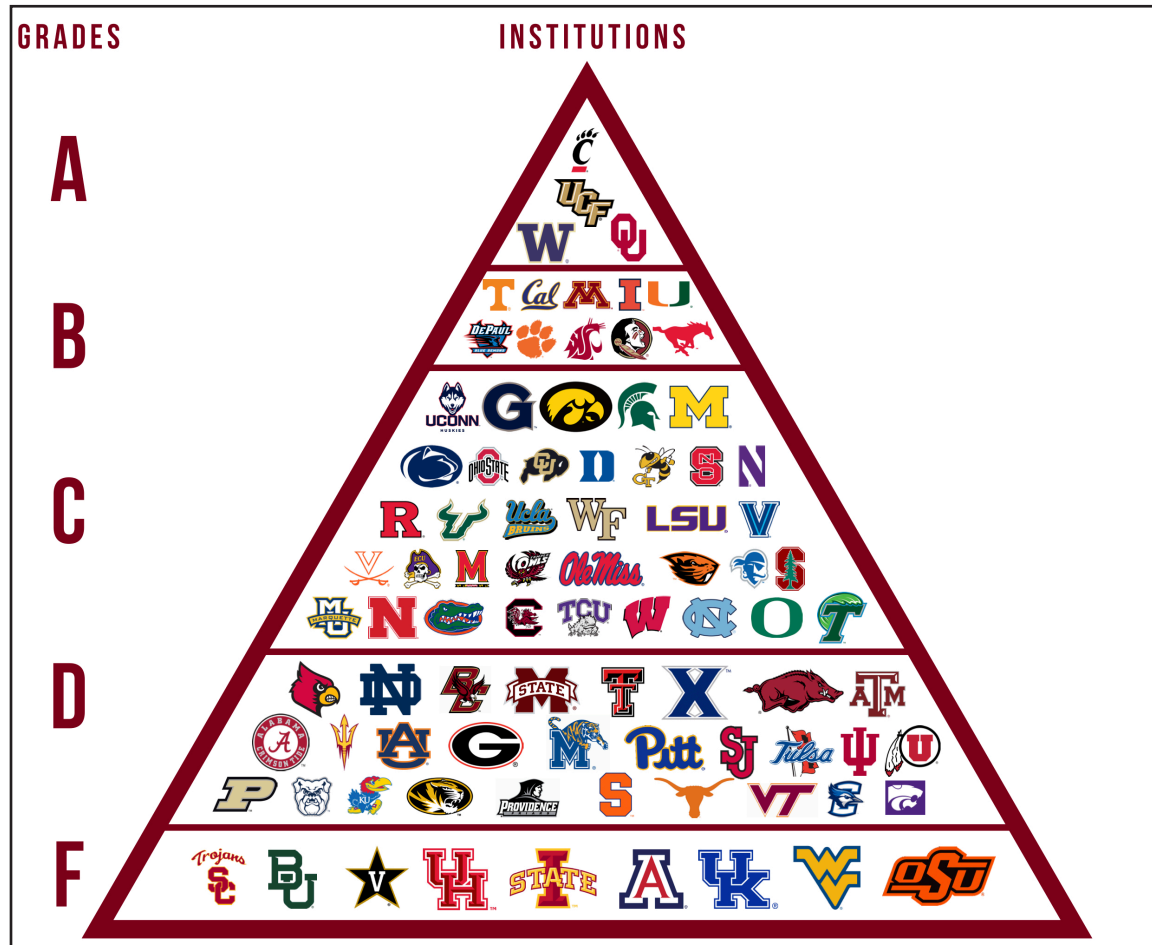
FIGURE 1. GRADES FOR INSTITUTIONS AND CONFERENCES IN SELECT 7 CONFERENCES 2019-20

GRADES	INSTITUTIONS	CONFERENCES
A		
B		
C		
D		
F		

The scale used to assign grades is as follows: A = 70-100%, B = 55-69%, C = 40-54%, D = 25-39%, F = 0-24% of women head coaches of women's teams in the AAC, ACC, Big East, Big Ten, Big 12, PAC-12, and SEC.



FIGURE 2. GRADES FOR INSTITUTIONS SELECT 7 CONFERENCES 2019-20



The scale used to assign grades is as follows: A = 70-100%, B = 55-69%, C = 40-54%, D = 25-39%, F = 0-24% of women head coaches of women's teams in the AAC, ACC, Big East, BIG Ten, Big 12, PAC-12, and SEC.



A report designed to  
make a difference in the  
lives of girls and women  
in sport and to increase  
the number of women in  
the coaching profession



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