



# NJSIAA TRAILBLAZER

When it came to success in the sport of basketball, Anne Donovan accomplished it all.

A 6-8 center from Ridgewood and the youngest of eight children, she played at Paramus Catholic under another legend, coach Rose Battaglia. Anne graduated in 1979 after leading the Paladins to four Bergen County championships and undefeated seasons as a junior and senior, culminating with consecutive NJSIAA Group 3 state titles. She scored more than 1,000 points in a season twice, graduating with a total of 2,582. She averaged 25 points and 17 rebounds as a senior. When the Star-Ledger honored the greatest New Jersey high school athletes of the 20th Century in 2000, it chose Donovan as Player of the Century for girls basketball.

After receiving more than 250 college scholarship offers, Donovan chose Old Dominion University in Virginia. During her four years there, she set school career records for points (2,719), rebounds (1,976), and blocks (801). Old Dominion won the AIAW national championship in 1980 and finished third in 1981. The first NCAA women's tournament was held in 1982, with ODU losing in the East semifinals. It reached the Final Four in 1983, losing in the semifinals. She was named national Player of the Year as a senior after averaging 17.5 points and 14.4 rebounds. She was also a two-time Academic All-American.

She graduated when professional opportunities for women were sparse, so she played in Japan and Italy between 1984-89. During that same period, she was also an American Olympic standout. After being selected to the 1980 team that didn't participate due to the U.S. boycott of the games in Moscow, she was part of the Gold Medal-winning United States teams at Los Angeles in 1984 and Seoul in 1988.

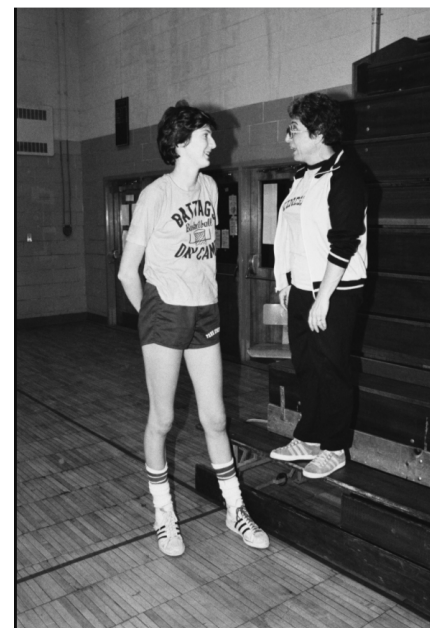
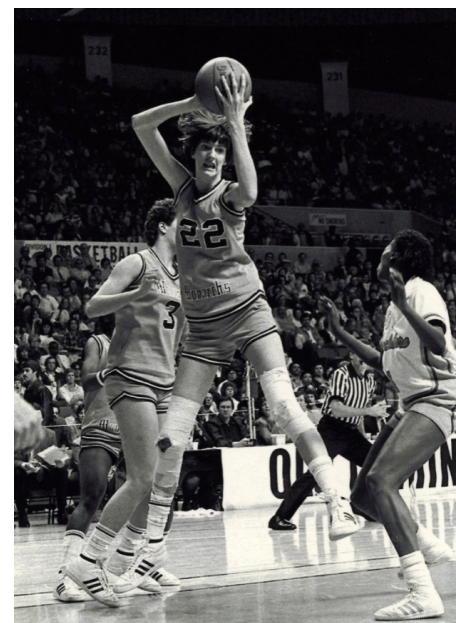
In 1989, she began her coaching career, first as an assistant at Old Dominion through 1995, and then as head coach at East Carolina from 1995 through '98. She then began coaching professionally as a head coach in the American Basketball League, but it soon folded. She spent the next decade as a head coach in the WNBA, with Indiana, Charlotte, Seattle and New York. She coached Seattle to the WNBA championship in 2004, and became the first female coach to win a league title.

Donovan returned both her home state and college coaching when she led Seton Hall from 2010-13. She then returned to the WNBA, spending three years as coach of the Connecticut Sun.

During her time in the WNBA, she also coached various U.S. national teams. Most notably, she was head coach of the Gold Medal-winning team at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

Donovan died on June 13, 2018 of heart failure at age 56.

Before her passing, she received just about every honor possible. She was inducted in the NJSIAA Hall of Fame in 2000, the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1995, the inaugural class of the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in 1998 and the FIBA Hall of Fame in 2015. In 2019, Paramus Catholic named its basketball court in her honor.



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