

WNBA Champion and Olympic Gold Medalist Sheryl Swoopes Honored by the Association for Applied Sport Psychology

CHAGRIN FALLS, Ohio – October 2014 – Sheryl Swoopes, four-time Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) champion, three-time Most Valuable Player and three-time Olympic Gold Medalist, was awarded the Performance Excellence Award by the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP), an international professional organization that promotes the field of sport and exercise psychology. Presented at AASP’s annual conference in Las Vegas, Nev., the award recognizes individuals who embody exemplary psychological principles associated with performance excellence as demonstrated through consistent achievement, merit or leadership over the course of their career.

Swoopes, regarded as one of the best female basketball players of all time, was named head women's basketball coach at Loyola University Chicago in 2013. Her excellence on and off the basketball court and her consistent performance in pressure situations over a 15 year span solidified her selection as the Performance Excellence Award recipient.

“When I got the news about the award I reflected on my life,” said Swoopes. “I looked at how far I’ve come and where I am headed—the good and bad. All of my life experiences happened for a reason, but they’ve shaped me for who I am today. Determination, focus, facing challenges with perseverance, and hard work and sacrifice are the four reasons critical to driving performance excellence in my life,” explained Swoopes.

After failing to qualify for the USA Olympic Trials and World Championships, Swoopes asked the judging committee what it would take for her to make the team. She learned she was physically, but not *mentally* prepared.

“I needed to seek help because I had a lot of issues in my life that were overwhelming. When I finally decided to open up to my clinical sport psychologist, I learned to deal with all the distractions in my life on and off court,” said Swoopes.

The successful player-turned coach understands issues student-athletes experience during their collegiate careers. “It is important for my players to have someone besides their coach to talk to,” Swoopes said. “I believe sport psychologists should be mandatory in all universities.”

The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) promotes ethical practice, science and advocacy in the field of sport and exercise psychology. Since 1986, AASP has been an international, multidisciplinary, professional organization that offers certification to qualified professionals in the field of sport and exercise psychology. With more than 2,000 members in 54 countries, AASP is a worldwide leader, sharing research and resources with the public via its website, www.appliedsportpsych.org.