



BIG EAST Continues Anti-Racism Efforts

-Basketball Teams to Wear Black Lives Matters Patches for 2020-21-

NEW YORK – In keeping with the BIG EAST Conference’s commitment to lead, educate and inspire on racial and social justice issues, the Conference’s eleven member schools have unanimously approved the display of Black Lives Matter (BLM) patches on their men’s and women’s basketball uniforms for the 2020-21 season.

The Conference also announced its support for the efforts of Coaches for Action (CFA), a coalition of 21 Black BIG EAST men’s basketball assistant coaches formed to help raise awareness in the fight against racism and to develop a sustainable action plan to dismantle prejudice, discrimination and oppression in Black, Brown, Indigenous and minoritized communities.

“We are proud that all eleven of our schools support the effort to bring attention through BIG EAST basketball to the Black Lives Matter movement and its goal of a more racially just world,” said BIG EAST Commissioner Val Ackerman. “We applaud the initiative and leadership of CFA and their efforts to shine a light on the challenges that our Black student-athletes, coaches and administrators face on a daily basis. We hope our BLM initiative, coupled with the BIG EAST’s prominence and visibility, can help our country bridge its protracted racial divide and allow us, once and for all, to live up to our national ideals of equality for all.”

A supplemental statement appears at this link: [insert].

The BIG EAST has had a long history of strong Black representation among its basketball student-athletes, coaches and referees, led by former Georgetown head coach John Thompson, Jr., a Hall of Famer and one of college basketball’s most prominent figures.

The BIG EAST recently announced a conference-wide partnership with RISE, a leading provider of educational programming that equips student-athletes and administrators to create positive change on matters of social justice and racial equality. RISE will also provide the BIG EAST with a non-partisan civic engagement curriculum designed to help student-athletes make an impact more broadly in their lives using the lens of sports.

The BIG EAST also recently established *BE the Change*, a conference-wide advocacy platform that enables student-athletes, coaches and administrators to engage in a wide range of racial and social justice issues. The platform includes *Conversations for Change*, an educational series that allows BIG EAST stakeholders to share perspectives about how race impacts their everyday experiences. *BE the Change* and the RISE partnership are outgrowths of the Conference’s

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group, which includes representation from all eleven schools and works to enhance DE&I efforts across all BIG EAST campuses.

The BIG EAST:

The BIG EAST Conference is an association of 11 nationally prominent colleges and universities that foster healthy athletic competition, community service and the pursuit of excellence in academic environments. The athletic programs of BIG EAST institutions provide national-caliber participation opportunities for more than 4,100 student-athletes on over 200 men's and women's teams in 22 sports. Established in 1979 and headquartered in New York City, the BIG EAST's members are located in eight of the country's top 36 largest media markets and include Butler University, University of Connecticut, Creighton University, DePaul University, Georgetown University, Marquette University, Providence College, St. John's University, Seton Hall University, Villanova University and Xavier University. For more information, visit www.bigeast.com.