AVCA Diversity Development Team Adds Three New Members

LEXINGTON, Ky. (June 1, 2021) – AVCA Diversity Development Board representative Nickie Sanlin recently recommended the addition of three new members to the AVCA Diversity Development Team and the current team members have accepted the recommendation dated May 11, 2021. The three new members joining the team effective July 1st are Virginia Tech head women’s volleyball coach Marci Byers, training director for Absolute Volleyball Academy of Texas, Marko Majstorovic, and University of Hawai’i assistant men’s volleyball coach Joshua Walker.

“It is such an honor to serve the volleyball community with some tremendously gifted and committed coaches,” Sanlin said. “With the addition of Marci, Marko, and Josh, the team is poised to continue tackling issues regarding race and social injustice in our sport. As a team, we are moving the needle and mobilizing efforts around coaching education, creating, and cultivating meaningful relationships, giving voice, and engaging Black and ethnic minority coaches as leaders in our sport.”

Byers, a Chicago, Illinois native, became the sixth head women’s volleyball coach in program history at Virginia Tech on January 29, 2020. The hiring also makes her the first Black female head coach in athletics program history. Byers comes over from New River Valley neighbor Radford University where she won 209 matches in 12 seasons, three Big South regular season championships, two tournament championships, and made two trips to the NCAA Tournament. The program’s success on and off the court earned Byers the Big South Volleyball Coach of the Decade for 2010-2019.

Majstorovic, a 2019 AVCA Diversity Award recipient, has 11 years of experience as a DI assistant coach as well as 10 years at the international level. A native of Belgrade, Serbia, Majstorovic graduated from the University of Belgrade Sports Academy with a Bachelor of Physical Education with a coaching concentration. Before going into coaching, he played professionally in his native Serbia. At Absolute Volleyball, he was involved in the continued development of the training program, working with Master Coaches and Directors to implement consistent training through observation and collaboration in practice planning.

Fresh off a national championship season for the University of Hawai’i men’s volleyball program, Walker just completed his sixth season on the coaching staff. Walker, a former Rainbow Warrior men’s volleyball player, graduated from Hawai’i in 2011 with a B.A. in English. In 2019, the Hawai’i men’s program finished as national runner-up and Walker was named the AVCA Assistant Coach of the Year. Since joining the coaching staff in 2016, the program has a record of 122-31.

AVCA Diversity Development Team members are appointed by recommendation of the team chair and vote of the active members of the team. Current members of the team are Maggie Couture, head women’s coach, Jacksonville University; Dr. Ramona Cox, associate athletic director/head girls coach, Detroit PAL/Cass Tech HS (MI); Sid Davidson, head boys coach, Long Beach Poly High School (CA); Dega de Gama, head women’s coach, SNHU; team secretary Leslie Flores-Cloud, head women’s coach, Eastern Washington University; Ray Gooden, head women’s coach, Northern Illinois University; and team chair Nickie Sanlin, head men’s/women’s coach, McKendree University.

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About AVCA
The AVCA, with its headquarters in Lexington, Ky., is managed by Associations International. The mission of the AVCA is to advance the sport of volleyball with AVCA coaches at the epicenter of leadership, advocacy, and professional development. With a membership of over 7,500 and counting, the AVCA provides a professional network for those individuals and companies dedicated to enhancing and promoting the sport. Members include collegiate, high school, club, youth, and Olympic coaches, as well as volleyball club directors. The AVCA provides education to volleyball coaches, recognition of elite players and coaches, promotion of volleyball competitions throughout the world, and networking opportunities for volleyball products and services providers. Further information is available at www.avca.org.