



SAN FRANCISCO

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

USF Women's Basketball Announces Jennifer Azzi as Head Coach

Legendary Collegiate, Olympic and Professional Player Ready to Rebuild Dons

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(San Francisco) – The University of San Francisco welcomes Jennifer Azzi, one of the most prominent names in women's basketball, as the head coach of the women's basketball program. The announcement was made Friday by USF Athletic Director, Debra Gore-Mann. The 2009 Women's Basketball Hall of Fame inductee brings a wealth of playing experience at the collegiate, international and professional levels to the Hilltop.

"I am excited to announce Jennifer Azzi as the new head coach of our women's basketball program," said Gore-Mann. "Her passion for the game, along with her professional reputation both in and around the sport of basketball, will prove to be a great asset to the program and our student-athletes. Jennifer brings a fresh perspective and a tremendous work ethic to USF's basketball program. I look forward to working with Jennifer in this new leadership capacity and building a successful program on the Hilltop."

USF officially introduced Coach Azzi Friday in a press conference at War Memorial Gymnasium on the San Francisco campus.

"I am excited and honored about the opportunity to lead the program at USF," said Azzi. "I have been asked to coach every year since I left the game. This is the first opportunity that feels right for me. USF has really strong values around educating the 'whole person'-- an element that is critical to developing a successful team."

"From my conversation with Jennifer, it is clear that she shares our commitment to excellence on the court, in the classroom, and in the community," commented USF President Rev. Stephen A. Privett, S.J. "Jennifer Azzi has been for many the face of women's basketball and now she will be that for USF. I am delighted to have such a polished, experienced, and articulate professional at the head of our women's basketball program. She is a welcome partner in the great enterprise of Jesuit Catholic education at USF."

Azzi becomes just the eighth head coach in USF's women's basketball history. One of the most dominant teams in the West Coast Conference during the 1990's, the Dons have struggled since winning three straight WCC Tournament titles from 1995-97 with back-to-back-to-back NCAA Tournament appearances. Since its last NCAA berth in 1997, San Francisco has recorded just one winning season (2002), but Azzi has confidence that the Dons can once again be a force at the conference and national level.

"The Dons have struggled in recent years," Azzi said. "However, I believe USF's current group of student-athletes has the ability to work hard and be successful. I look forward to working with Debi Gore-Mann, who is a true visionary, and who brings a wealth of passion and leadership to collegiate athletics."

After a lifetime associated as both a player and an ambassador for women's basketball, the assignment at USF will be Azzi's first as a Division I head coach. The Bay Area Sports Hall-of-Famer (BASHOF) brings an impressive playing resume featuring successful tenures with the USA National Team, five seasons in the WNBA, a founding member of the American Basketball League (ABL), professional experience overseas and an All-American collegiate career at Stanford.

A four-year starter at Stanford from 1987-90, Azzi became the first Cardinal women's basketball player to earn the Wade Trophy, the James Naismith Player of the Year award, and the Honda-Broderick National Player of the Year honor. She was Stanford's first WBCA/Kodak All-American as a junior in 1989, and she earned the award a second time as a senior in 1990.

A three-time All-Pacific-10 performer and the 1990 Pac-10 Player of the Year, Azzi led the Cardinal to a pair of conference titles (1989, 1990) while being a catalyst for Stanford's first national championship in 1990, leading her squad to a 32-1 record as the squad's captain.

She finished her career at Stanford with 1,634 career points (eighth), 13.4 points per game (tied for ninth), 191 3-pointers made (seventh) and departed as the Cardinal's all-time leader in career assists (751) and steals (271), and she is currently second and third all-time, respectively, in each category.

Upon her graduation from Stanford in 1990 with a B.A. in economics, Azzi embarked on a professional career that initially took her overseas before returning to compete once again on American soil. Azzi made successful stops abroad in Italy (1990-91), France (1991-93), and Sweden (1994-95).

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Azzi Release, Contd.

In the American portion of her professional career, Azzi was one of the founding members of the American Basketball League. A three-time all-star, she played for the San Jose Lasers from 1996 to 1999. During that span, she was named the March of Dimes Female Athlete of the Year in 1996 and was awarded the Sport Image Award, with NFL great Jerry Rice, in 1996.

After the ABL folded in 1999, Azzi was drafted by the Detroit Shock in the first round, fifth overall pick, of the inaugural WNBA draft. During her four years in the league, she played for the Shock (1999), Utah Starzz (2000-03) and the San Antonio Silver Stars (2003). Each season, the guard led her respective teams in minutes played. In 2000, she led the league in free-throw percentage, shooting .930 from the line and set the league all-time single season record for 3-point field goal percentage, hitting 30-of-58 (.517). She finished her career as the all-time WNBA 3-point field goal leader, connecting at a .458 clip.

Internationally, Azzi was a member of the USA Basketball Senior National Team from 1990-91 and 1993-98. A key member of the United States gold medal-winning 1996 Olympic Team that concluded a perfect 60-0 season with an 8-0 record during the Olympic Games in Atlanta, Azzi played on 13 USA National Teams, compiling a mark of 114-14. She also medaled three times at the World Championships, claiming gold in 1998 and 1990, while earning a bronze in 1994.

Azzi is a member of several Hall of Fames, including the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame (2009), the Anderson County Hall of Fame (2009), the Bay Area Sports Hall of Fame (2007), the San Jose Sports Authority Hall of Fame (2006), the Knoxville Hall of Fame (1998), and the Oak Ridge High School Hall of Fame. In 1995, Azzi became the youngest inductee into the Stanford University Hall of Fame.

Since retiring from her playing career, Azzi has continued to serve as an ambassador for the sport both locally and internationally. Azzi has traveled thousands of miles representing the NBA and WNBA on trips to Africa, Denmark and Dubai. In addition, Azzi has conducted youth basketball clinics and workshops across the globe.

A highly-regarded motivational speaker, Azzi has conducted seminars for dozens of companies, including members of the Fortune-500 – Coca-Cola, Disney, McDonalds, Nike and Proctor & Gamble. Azzi has written articles and features for a wide variety of publications, including Success Magazine and online at WNBA.com and NBC Quokka Sports Online. She has also made countless media appearances on network and cable TV.

- THE JENNIFER AZZI FILE -

Honors and Achievements

Women's Basketball Hall of Fame (2009)
Anderson County Hall of Fame (2009)
Bay Area Sports Hall of Fame (2007)
San Jose Sports Hall of Fame (2006)
Knoxville Hall of Fame (1998)
Oak Ridge High School Hall of Fame (1997)
March of Dimes Female Athlete of the Year (1997)
Sport Image Award (with Jerry Rice) (1996)
Stanford University Hall of Fame (1995)

USA National Team Experience

Gold Medal, 1996 Atlanta Olympics
Gold Medal, 1990 & 1998 (captain), World Championships
Silver Medal, 1991, Pan Am Games
Bronze Medal, 1994 World Championships
Jones Cup Champion, 1988
Alternate, 1992 Barcelona Olympics, 2000 Sydney Olympics

Professional Playing Career

United States

WNBA

San Antonio Silver Stars, captain (2003)
Utah Starzz, captain (2000-03)
Detroit Shock, captain (1999)
American Basketball League (ABL)
Founding member of the league
San Jose Lasers, captain (1996-99)
Three-time All-Star

Professional Playing Career, Contd.

International

Sweden

Arvika Basket, captain (1993-95)

France

Orchies, captain (1991-93)

Italy

Viterbo (1990-91)

Collegiate Playing Career – Stanford (1986-90)

Wade Trophy, Academic + Athletic Excellence, 1990
Naismith Player of the Year, 1990
Final Four MVP, 1990
Pacific-10 Conference Player of the Year, 1990
WBCA/Kodak All-American, 1989, 1990
All-Pac-10, 1988, 1989, 1990
Pac-10 Championships, 1989, 1990
NCAA National Champions, 1990
Four-year starter
Four-year captain

Community Involvement

NBA/WBNA International Ambassador, 2003-present
Basketball without Borders – Africa, Copenhagen, Dubai