

## ★ DON FLANAGAN ★

Few coaches anywhere can match Don Flanagan's spectacular career marks as a high school basketball coach.

What's even more amazing is that Flanagan is continuing his success in his third year as the women's coach with the University of New Mexico Lobos.

He was the key to bringing respectability to women's basketball at UNM. His success in leading his team to the championship game in the 1996 WAC tournament marked the first time in the WAC that a rookie basketball coach ever led his or her team to the championship game in the WAC tournament.

Flanagan's team got off to a 14-4 start through Jan. 17 this year after compiling a 14-15 mark in 1995-96 and 18-10 last season when the Lobos ranked No. 11 nationally in women's home basketball attendance with 63,222 fans.

His goal in the near future is to win championships for the Lobos like he did at the high school level and maybe someday take UNM to the NCAA Final Four.

Flanagan, 53, the 62nd inductee into the Albuquerque Sports Hall of Fame, set an ultra-high standard for excellence, unheard of in the Land of Enchantment at the high school level.

He had unparalleled separate winning streaks of 77, 74, 69, 66 and 60 games while compiling a 401-13 record and winning 11 state championships as girls basketball coach at Eldorado High School.

Three times (1985, 1994, 1995) he was nominated for national high school coach of the year. His high school girls teams list 33 who went on to play college basketball and seven who earned All-America honors. Eleven of his former players or assistants now are head coaches. Both The Albuquerque Tribune and the Albuquerque Journal named Flanagan coach of the year six times.

"I've had any number of opportunities to return to coaching boys' teams, but I really prefer coaching the girls' and women's teams now," Flanagan said. "I've been fortunate to have worked with highly-motivated athletes.

"My style hasn't changed in coaching boys and girls basketball. I'm

a disciplinarian and I stress fundamentals."

Flanagan, a native of Cambridge, Mass., graduated from Cornwall Academy in Great Barrington, Mass. in 1963 then attended Hartwick (N.Y.) College for one year.

He remembers joining his two brothers, David and Kevin, as members of the "Flanagan All Stars" who played basketball games in Connecticut prior to exhibition pro games by the Boston Celtics. He played additional summer leagues games there and in Maine.

Flanagan decided to tour Europe for a year, mostly on a bicycle, then joined the National Guard. He served in Korea with the Army in 1968-69. He remembers meeting members of New Mexico's famed "Enchilada Air Force" while being stationed at Taegu.

When he returned home, Flanagan had several jobs before enrolling at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colo., where he graduated with a physical education degree in 1971.

He coached boys teams, first at Coronado High School in Gallina, N.M., in 1971-72, then at Stonington, Conn. in 1972-73, and finally at Window Rock, Ariz. High School in 1974-79.

In 1979 he moved his family to Albuquerque. Flanagan missed out on a coaching job with the St. Pius X High school boy's team and worked for a real estate firm. Several weeks later he was hired to succeed Steve Silverberg as girl's coach at Eldorado.

He began his coaching tenure at Eldorado with a state championship team that went 28-0. The next season it was 26-0, then 22-2. Flanagan says he was fortunate to have profited from accelerated girl's programs from his two "feeder" units at Hoover Middle School and Eisenhower Middle School.

The Flanagan file continued to steamroll at 26-0 in 1982-83, then 26-0, 26-1, 23-3, 26-0, 25-1, 26-0, 26-0, 25-1, 26-0, 26-0, 24-2 and 24-3.

He has a 532-69 coaching record; 95-37 coaching high school boy's teams, 401-13 coaching high school girl's teams and 36-19 through Jan. 17, 1998, at UNM.

Flanagan and his wife, Wahleah, are parents of three children, Sean, 28, Shane, 22, and Brent, 20.