



# NJSIAA TRAILBLAZER

Chris Dailey has had an amazing career in women's basketball, and it all began as a New Jersey high school standout in the early days of Title IX.

Dailey has been a part of the wildly successful University of Connecticut program since 1985, when newly-hired coach Geno Auriemma's first move was to bring her aboard as his assistant coach. She was promoted to associate head coach in 1988, and has remained ever since. UConn has won 11 national championships and appeared in 22 Final Fours, including a national runner-up showing to South Carolina this past weekend. The Huskies have also had six unbeaten seasons.

Dailey also won a national championship as a player, having been a starter and two-year captain for Rutgers, which captured the AIAW championship during her senior year in 1982.

Before all of that, she was a star high school player at St. Peter's in New Brunswick, where she graduated in 1977 in the days when girls basketball was in the midst of a swift ascent following the 1972 passage of Title IX, which guaranteed equal educational and athletic opportunities for females.

At St. Peter's, the first step was being able to practice every other day in the main gym, rather than in a tiny, cramped side building.

"Before that, it was like every home game we played was like an away game because we never practiced at home in the gym," she told the Connecticut Post. "I knew that (the boys) had something we didn't. I knew that it wasn't right and it wasn't fair."

After St. Peter's, it was on to college a few blocks away at Rutgers, where head coach Theresa Greutz was one of the few full-time women's college coaches in that era.

"I think with Title IX, it probably provided more money in terms of budget and travel and those sort of things," she said in the interview. "Moving forward, opportunities to go to college on a scholarship increased significantly. I'm sure there were some schools that were giving limited or partial scholarships, but I know that Title IX gave opportunities to many more girls at that point."

The women's college game continued to grow rapidly coinciding with her career. Women's college sports had been governed by the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), but the NCAA decided to get involved in women's sports, as well as men's athletics, in the early 1980s. Both the AIAW and NCAA held tournaments (the last for the AIAW and first for the NCAA) in 1982. Rutgers competed in the AIAW version, and defeated Texas, 83-77, for the national championship at the Palestra in Philadelphia. Dailey averaged 3.1 points and 2.6 rebounds that season. Rutgers went 108-23 during her career.

After graduating, she was an assistant at Cornell in 1982-83 and at Rutgers for 1983-84 and 1984-85 seasons. When Auriemma was hired at Connecticut later in 1985, he immediately reached out to Dailey to serve as his assistant.

Since then, the duo have led UConn to over 1,000 wins and the 11 NCAA championships. Dailey, who coordinates the team's recruiting, has helped attract and develop close to 50 All-Americans. Over the years, she has also filled in as interim coach six different times, and has posted a 12-0 record.

Her stature in women's college basketball is so great that in 2018 she was inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

