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The Future of the NBA

The photo of Kathrine Switzer being pushed by men running along side her in the Boston Marathon seems like a relevant image with all the gains women have made in sports. Women like Beth Mowins, who was the first to call play-by-play for Monday Night Football. Or Jessica Mendoza, the first female analyst for Sunday Night Baseball, and Sarah Thomas, the first permanent female official in the NFL.

Becky Hammon has a chance to make history, again. She is already the first female full-time assistant coach in the NBA, and this week she'll be the first woman to interview for a head-coaching job.

This interview doesn't guarantee Hammon will get the job, and she is up against some great contenders, but the interview itself means the NBA is ready for a female head coach.

Out of the big four professional sports, the NBA (and maybe the NHL) is the most ready for a female head coach. Baseball and softball are very different games, and no woman has played professional football.

Basketball is the same for both genders. Every player learns how to dribble, how to stay in front on defense, and how to make a lay-in. The difference comes in the game above the rim, this is where assistant coaches come in, and the speed, which Hammon is used to anyway being an assistant for the Spurs (it doesn't hurt to learn under Coach Popovich either).

Some people will be against this. They'll say things like, "a woman can't be in a locker room," or, "men won't listen." Female sports journalist are in locker rooms constantly, and Hammon has been in the Spurs locker room for four years. Women have been leading men for years.

Many NBA players credit their mothers for their success (think Kevin Durant's mom, Wanda: the *real* MVP). We see women every day in leadership roles as school principals, storeowners, and restaurant managers. Women even coach little boys and girls in basketball.

So why can't Becky Hammon do that in the NBA? She is just as qualified for a head-coaching position as any other man interviewing for the job. Hammon played 13 years of professional basketball. She was a six-time all-star, the WNBA assist leader in 2007, and a bronze medalist in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Becky can ball.

In the near future Hammon will be a head coach in the NBA, and probably the first woman to do it. She'll begin a long tradition of successful female head coaches and inspire many girls to stand on the sideline of a basketball game coaching the most elite athletes in the world.

The future of the NBA is Becky Hammon.

The future of the NBA is female.