On the SCOREROARD

University of Hartford head women’s basketball coach Jennifer Rizzotti led the USA Women’s Under 18 National Team to a gold medal at the FIBA Americas U18 Championship in June. Rizzotti served as the USA head coach for the first time in her coaching career. She was an assistant with the gold medal-winning U18 team in 2006.

With an 81-38 victory over Brazil on June 27 at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., the USA team finished 5-0 in the tournament and won its fourth straight gold medal against the top 18-and-under international competition in the FIBA Americas zone, which includes Central, North, and South America.

“Sometimes at a young age, I think you rely so much on individual talent,” says Rizzotti. “This group really came together, and I think we were much better because we learned to play as a team.”

The victory over Brazil capped a tournament in which the USA flourished from the start. In winning five straight games, the USA outscored its opponents, 467-188, for an average margin of victory of 55.8 points—by far a tournament best.

In addition, the USA led the championship in 11 different statistical categories, including scoring offense (93.4 ppg), field goal percentage (.486), rebounding margin per game (plus-33.2), and assists per game (20.4). Further, seven of the tournament’s top 10 leaders in field goal percentage were the USA players.


Also, as one of the top four finishing teams in this year’s FIBA Americas U18 Championship for Women, the USA earned a berth in the 2011 FIBA U19 World Championships next summer in Chile.