



Coaches are honored at NJSCA Hall of Fame event

January 19, 2024

A crowd of nearly 300 gathered at Pines Manor in Edison on Jan. 14 for the 28th annual New Jersey Scholastic Coaches Association Hall of Fame awards event, which was held in cooperation with the NJSIAA.

A total of 45 coaches were honored, including the 19 who were inducted into the NJSCA Hall of Fame. The others were presented National Federation coaching awards.

The Coaches Hall of Fame has a long history. Its roots date to 1961, when the New Jersey Interscholastic Coaches Association honored all football coaches with undefeated seasons.

In 1964, the NJICA honored coaches from all sports, past or present, who had been nominated from their county by their peers.

Then, in 1983, the honor award program was renamed as the NJICA "Hall of Fame" and included all past honorees.

In 1995, the New Jersey Scholastic Coaches Association assumed sponsorship of the Hall of Fame, for all head varsity coaches in the public and non-public NJSIAA member schools.

The following individuals comprised this year's class, which brings the all-time number of honorees to 1,871.

Jeff Capone, Hunterdon Central HS / Delaware Valley HS / Voorhees HS

Jason Carcich, Wayne Valley HS

Thomas Connerton, Donovan Catholic HS

Donald Covin, Long Branch HS

Maria DiCondina, Paramus Catholic HS / Glen Ridge HS

George Glover, Westwood Regional HS

Sandy Gordon, Ramapo HS

Dr. Carl Lange, Collingswood HS

Dr. Stan Liptzin, Lakewood HS

Anthony Melesurgo, Bound Brook HS

Barnes Reid, Irvington HS

Mergin Sina, Gill St. Bernards School

Bill Soranno, Union HS

Clinton Tabb III, Pennsauken HS

Karl Torchia, Christian Brothers Academy / Middletown South HS

Matthew Varhley, Westfield HS

Joe Whalen, Long Branch HS / Saint Rose HS

Benjie Wimberly, Eastside High School (Paterson) / Paterson Catholic / Hackensack High School

Raymond Zorovich*, Academy o/t Holy Angels / Paramus Catholic HS / Immaculate Heart Academy

**Posthumous award*

Also honored were those receiving National Federation Coach of the Year Awards. That group included three who received sectional honors (New Jersey, New York and the New England states) as well as New Jersey honorees from each sport.

Roman Ammirato, St. Augustine Prep School - Ice Hockey
Kathy Bradley, Holmdel HS - Girls Golf
Kelly Carr, Point Pleasant Borough HS - Field Hockey
Byron Collins, Gill St. Bernard's School - Boys Lacrosse
Jerry Duffey, Chatham HS - Girls Fencing
Brian Dunn, Old Tappan HS - Football
Jeffrey Fisher, Robbinsville HS - Boys Soccer
Andy Fitz, Delaware Valley Regional HS - Boys Wrestling
Jessica Gadaleta, Saint John Vianney HS - Boys Volleyball
Tom Hengel, Clearview Regional HS - Girls Cross Country
Mark Jamieson, Egg Harbor Twp HS - Boys Swimming & Diving
James Maher, Lawrence HS - Baseball
Daniel Montferrat, Ewing HS - Girls Basketball
Mike Penta, Elizabeth HS - Girls Track & Field
Kenneth Rossi, West Morris Central HS - Girls Soccer
Nicholas Scalzo, Marlboro HS - Softball
Neal Sharma, Summit HS - Boys Cross Country
Matthew Stefanski, Wall Township HS - Boys Golf
Clinton Tabb III, Pennsauken HS - Boys Track & Field*
Jonathan Thai, Verona HS - Girls Tennis
Rusty Thomsen, Saint Joseph Metuchen HS - Boys Bowling
Beverly Torok, Westfield HS - Girls Volleyball*
Stephen Tucker, Our Lady of Mercy Academy - Girls Swimming & Diving
Jeff Tukel, West Morris Mendham HS - Boys Tennis*
Marquis Webb, Eastside HS - Boys Basketball
Emily Wescott, Kingsway Regional HS - Girls Lacrosse

****Sectional honoree***

The NJSCA Hall of Fame is a prestigious honor, since the coaches are selected by a committee comprised of other coaches.

Beverly Torok of Westfield was recipient of the National Federation Sectional Coach of the Year for girls volleyball. In addition to her coaching, she has long served the NJSIAA, including participation on the Executive Committee.

This past fall, she coached Westfield to a 24-1 record and its first state volleyball title, which came with a three-set victory over Old Bridge in the Group 4 final. Torok, who has been at Westfield for 29 years, also won her 500th career match during the campaign.

"This is such an honor," she said. "I'm honored to receive the state award, let alone the whole northeast. This last year was big, because we won the state championship for the first time. Those kids were amazing. We had no drama and they competed every day. The culture I've tried to build came to fruition."

Among the Hall of Fame inductees was Maria DiCondina, who coached 11 years of basketball and seven years of soccer at Paramus Catholic, and 19 years of basketball and three years of field hockey at Glen Ridge.



Beverly Torok with Westfield HS Athletic Director Sandra Mamary (left) and NJSIAA Assistant Director Derryk Sellers (right)

Her first head coach coaching job was a major one. She took over for a legend, Dr. Rose Battaglia, at Paramus Catholic in 1983, when the school was in the midst of a run that placed it near the top of the national rankings. Her first team won a state championship, one of three that her teams captured during a 165-54 tenure.

“I’m overwhelmed to received this award,” she said. “I’ve been inducted into the Paramus Catholic and Glen Ridge Halls of Fame, but when I received this, I was extremely grateful for so many reasons.”

Battaglia, who died in 2020 at age 91, was a beloved figure in New Jersey sports. Among her many career honors were inductions into the NJSCA, NJSIAA and National Women’s Basketball Halls of Fame. She was also a major influence on DiCondina, who was her assistant at Paramus Catholic before her promotion after Battaglia left for a college position at Iona.



***Maria DiCondina and
NJSIAA President Jason Corley***

“Through my career, she never left my side,” DiCondina said. “I never stopped learning from her. I would meet with her, she would come to practices, she’d be in the stands for games. I was very fortunate for that, in addition to having great talent to coach. I feel like one of the luckiest coaches.”

Another inductee into the NJSCA Hall of Fame was Joe Whalen, who has coached boys and girls basketball at a number of schools, including St. Anthony, Christian Brothers Academy, Long Branch, St. Rose, Montclair Immaculate and St. Thomas Aquinas.

For Whalen, a special part of the NJSCA honor is how the selection represents recognition from fellow coaches.

“It doesn’t get any better than this,” he said. “Longevity is important. To do it at a lot of places is a testament to my wife and family. And to be recognized by my peers is tremendous. That’s what it’s about. When your own peers recognize and respect you, there’s just nothing better than that.”