



NEWS RELEASE

2023-24 National Coaches of the Year Selected by NFHS Coaches Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dan Schuster

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (January 13, 2025) — Twenty-four high school coaches from across the country have been selected as 2023-24 National Coaches of the Year by the NFHS Coaches Association.

The NFHS, which has been recognizing coaches through an awards program since 1982, honors coaches in the top 10 girls sports and top 10 boys sports (by participation numbers), and in two “other” sports – one for boys and one for girls – that are not included in the top 10 listings. The NFHS also recognizes a spirit coach and an Adapted/Allied/Unified coach in separate award categories. Winners of NFHS awards must be active coaches during the year for which they receive their award. This year’s awards recognize coaches for the 2023-24 school year.

Recipients of the 2023-24 national awards for boys sports are: **Timothy Vinson**, baseball, Iberia (Missouri) High School; **Mike Hilmer**, basketball, Troy Mills (Iowa) North Linn High School; **Kevin Hopp**, cross country, Stevens Point (Wisconsin) High School; **Tiger LaVerde**, football, Kirtland (Ohio) High School; **David Kuhn**, golf, McMurray (Pennsylvania) Peters Township High School; **Tim Beck**, soccer, Glendale (Arizona) Ironwood High School; **Dusty Thomas**, swimming and diving, Boaz (Alabama) High School; **Terry Swopes, tennis, Ada (Oklahoma) High School**; **Ernie Brooks**, track and field, Prineville (Oregon) Crook County High School; and **Maurice Atwood**, wrestling, Gibsonville (North Carolina) Eastern Guilford High School.

The recipients of the 2023-24 national awards for girls sports are: **Brian Ebert**, basketball, Frankfort (Kansas) High School; **Terrence Krall**, cross country, Slinger (Wisconsin) High School; **Eric Sanders**, golf, Grand Forks (North Dakota) Red River High School; **Cathie Connors**, lacrosse, Portland (Maine) Waynflete School; **Barb Chura**, soccer, Phoenix (Arizona) Xavier College Preparatory; **Kyle Peacocke**, softball, Mill Creek (Washington) Jackson High School; **Lia Kunnapas**, swimming and diving, Washington Township (New Jersey) Immaculate Heart Academy; **Natalie Meyer**, tennis, Cottonwood Heights (Utah) Brighton High School; **Chris White**, track and field, Seneca (South Carolina) High School; and **Julie Gordon**, volleyball, Montgomery (Alabama) Academy.

The recipient of the National Coach of the Year for spirit is **Megan Wesolowski** of Mount Sinai (New York) High School. The recipient of the National Coach of the Year for Adapted/Allied/Unified sports is **Mike O'Brien** of Frederick (Maryland) Tuscarora High School. **Frank Colabufo**, ice hockey coach at Camillus (New York) West Genesee High School, was chosen in the "Others" category for boys sports, and **Eileen Donahue**, field hockey coach at Watertown (Massachusetts) High School, was chosen in the "Others" category for girls sports.

The NFHS receives nominations from its member state associations, which often works with the state coaches' association in its respective state. The state association then contacts the potential state award recipients to complete a coach profile form that requests information regarding the coach's record, membership in and affiliation with coaching and other professional organizations, involvement with other school and community activities and programs, and coaching philosophy. To be approved as an award recipient and considered for sectional and national coach of the year consideration, this profile form must be completed by the coach or designee and then approved by the executive director (or designee) of the state athletic/activities association.

The next award level after state coach of the year is sectional coach of the year. The NFHS is divided into eight geographical sections. They are as follows: Section 1 – Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, RI, VT); Section 2 – Mideast (DE, DC, KY, MD, OH, PA, VA, WV); Section 3 – South (AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN); Section 4 – Central (IL, IN, IA, MI, WI); Section 5 – Midwest (KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD); Section 6 – Southwest (AR, CO, NM, OK, TX); Section 7 – West (AZ, CA, HI, NV, UT); and Section 8 – Northwest (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY).

The NFHS Coaches Association has an advisory committee composed of a chair and eight sectional representatives. The sectional committee representatives evaluate the state award recipients

from the states in their respective sections and select the best candidates for the sectional award in each sport category. The NFHS Coaches Association Advisory Committee then considers the sectional candidates in each sport, ranks them according to a point system, and determines a national winner for each of the 20 sport categories, the spirit category, the Adapted/Allied/Unified category and two “other” categories.

A total of 964 coaches are being recognized this year with state, sectional and national awards.

Following are biographical sketches of the 24 NFHS National High School Coaches of the Year for 2023-24:

COACHES OF THE YEAR – BOYS SPORTS

Tennis

Terry Swopes

Ada, Oklahoma

Terry Swopes has coached boys and girls tennis at Ada High School since 2006, leading the junior high teams and assisting at the high school level until 2019. He was a part of nine Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association (OSSAA) state championships as an assistant coach. He took over head coaching duties in 2020 and last season broke through, leading the boys and girls teams to OSSAA state titles. It was an especially special achievement for the boys team, comprised of seniors who have played tennis together since elementary school. In their sophomore year, a teammate tragically passed away, which bonded the group further with a shared goal to win a state title in his honor. Swopes was named Oklahoma Tennis Coaches Association Class 4A Coach of the Year in 2024 after winning the award for Class 5A in 2022 and 2023. He has also served three terms on the Oklahoma Tennis Coaches Association Board of Directors and is the current association president.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and

support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,800 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 8 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Bruce Howard, 317-972-6900
Director of Publications and Communications
National Federation of State High School Associations
bhoward@nfhs.org

Chris Boone, 317-972-6900
Assistant Director of Publications and Communications
National Federation of State High School Associations
cboone@nfhs.org