



South Dakota High School
Coaching Association

54th Annual Awards Ceremony

Sunday, July 20, 2025

1:00PM

Mitchell Performing Arts Center

Special Feature: Special Olympics Awards



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SOUTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL COACHES ASSOCIATION 54TH ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY PROGRAM

MISTRESSES OF CEREMONIESMICHELLE EVERSON & ALISHA LOCKHART
WELCOME LARRY AAKER , PRESIDENT
AWARDSLARRY AAKER, PRESIDENT

- Girls' Cross Country Coach of the Year
- Boys' Cross Country Coach of the Year
- Cheer Coach of the Year
- Dance Coach of the Year
- Girls' Soccer Coach of the Year
- Boys' Soccer Coach of the Year
- Football Coach of the Year
- Volleyball Coach of the Year
- Girls' Wrestling Coach of the Year
- Boys' Wrestling Coach of the Year
- Gymnastics Coach of the Year
- Girls' Basketball Coach of the Year
- Boys' Basketball Coach of the Year
- Girls' Track & Field Coach of the Year

- Boys' Track & Field Coach of the Year
- Tennis Coach of the Year
- Softball Coach of the Year
- Girls' Golf Coach of the Year
- Boys' Golf Coach of the Year
- Jr. High/ Middle School Assistant Coach of the Year
- Boy's Athletic Assistant Coach of the Year
- Girl's Athletics Assistant Coach of the Year
- Athletic Director of the Year
- Official of the Year
- "Jerry P. Miller" Distinguished Service Award
- Max Hawk Award
- "Bryan Brewer" Power of Influence Award
- SDHSCA Coaches Ring of Honor

Special Olympics South Dakota AwardsJohna Thum, VP of Field Services
SDHSCA Hall of Fame

Closing Remarks & Passing of the Gavel..... Michelle Everson & Alisha Lockhart
"Wayne Carney" Past President AwardWayne Carney



SOUTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL COACHES ASSOCIATION

2024-2025 OFFICERS



LARRY AAKER
PIERRE
PRESIDENT



PAUL HENDRY
RAPID CITY
PRESIDENT ELECT



LINDA DEBOER
MILLER
PAST PRESIDENT



JIM DORMAN
SIoux FALLS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



IN LOVING MEMORY

KATHERINE A. LARSON

KATHIE GRADUATED FROM LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL IN SIOUX FALLS, SD IN 1974. SHE EARNED A BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE FROM AUGUSTANA COLLEGE IN 1978 WITH A MAJOR IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION ALONG WITH HER COACHING CERTIFICATE. KATHIE BEGAN HER TEACHING CAREER WITH THE SIOUX FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS AN ELEMENTARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER, AS WELL AS BEING THE ASSISTANT GYMNASTICS COACH FOR LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL FROM 1975-79.

IN 1980, KATHIE WAS THE HEAD GYMNASTICS COACH FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA WHILE COMPLETING HER GRADUATE WORK IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION WITH AN EMPHASIS ON COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE. DURING HER TIME AT UND, HER TEAM PLACED FIRST AT THE DIVISION II REGIONAL TOURNAMENT AND QUALIFIED TWO IN THE ALL-AROUND COMPETITION FOR NATIONALS. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY A UND GYMNASTICS TEAM QUALIFIED FOR NATIONALS.

KATHIE MOVED BACK TO SIOUX FALLS AFTER ONE YEAR AT UND TO BEGIN A LONG AND SUCCESSFUL CAREER AS AN EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT IN BIOLOGY AND GYMNASTIC COACH. AS THE ASSISTANT GYMNASTICS COACH FOR LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL FROM 1980-1991, ALONG WITH HEAD COACH LOLLY FORSETH, LINCOLN WON NINE REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS, THREE RUNNER-UP STATE TITLES, AND FOUR STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS. KATHIE WON THE "ASSISTANT GYMNASTICS COACH OF THE YEAR" AWARD BY THE SOUTH DAKOTA GYMNASTICS COACHES ASSOCIATION THREE TIMES; 1988, 1989 AND 1990. KATHIE TOOK OVER AS THE HEAD GYMNASTICS COACH AT LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL FROM 1991-1996.

KATHIE BELIEVED STRONGLY IN PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE STATE AND NATIONAL SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS. SOME OF KATHIE'S PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS WERE:

- SOUTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL COACHES ASSOCIATION - 20 YEARS
- SOUTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL COACHES ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS - 8 YEARS
- SOUTH DAKOTA GYMNASTICS JUDGES ASSOCIATION - 20 YEARS
- SOUTH DAKOTA GYMNASTICS COACHES ASSOCIATION - 20 YEARS
- NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC COACHES ASSOCIATION - 16 YEARS

KATHIE ATTENDED ELEVEN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC COACHES ASSOCIATION CLINICS. THE SDHSCA HELD A SPECIAL PLACE IN KATHIE'S HEART. SHE CHERISHED THE FRIENDSHIPS THAT SHE DEVELOPED AMONGST HER PEERS THROUGHOUT THE STATE AND NATION.

"KATHIE WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR HER SINCERITY AND LOYALTY TOWARD THE PEOPLE THAT SHE INSPIRED THROUGHOUT HER LIFETIME AND HER SPIRIT WILL LIVE IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER." - LOLLY FORSETH (LINCOLN GYMNASTIC COACH)

IN 2010 KATHIE LARSON'S SISTER, LINDA LARSON, STARTED THE KATHIE LARSON COACHES' GRANT PROGRAM. THE PURPOSE OF THIS GRANT IS TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL COACHES ASSOCIATION TO ATTEND NATIONAL COACHING/ATHLETIC CLINICS, CONFERENCES OR SEMINARS. ONE GRANT MUST BE AWARDED TO A FEMALE, ONE AWARDED TO A GYMNASTICS COACH AND THE REMAINDER CAN BE HEAD OR ASSISTANT ATHLETIC COACHES OR ATHLETIC DIRECTORS. IF NO FEMALE OR GYMNASTICS COACHES APPLY THOSE GRANTS MAY BE AWARDED TO OTHER APPLICANTS. AN INDIVIDUAL MUST BE A MEMBER OF THE SDHSCA AND CAN ONLY RECEIVE THIS GRANT ONCE EVERY FIVE YEARS. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION GO TO THE ASSOCIATION WEBSITE.



SOUTH DAKOTA COACHES FOUNDATION

THE SOUTH DAKOTA COACHES FOUNDATION WAS CHARTERED DECEMBER 22, 1993. THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH THE FOUNDATION WAS ORGANIZED ARE EXCLUSIVELY CHARITABLE AND EDUCATIONAL. THE GENERAL PURPOSE AND PLAN OF OPERATION OF THE FOUNDATION IS TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT GIFTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ANY SOURCE AND TO USE ITS ASSETS IN FURTHERANCE OF ITS CHARITABLE PURPOSES. THESE GIFTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS MAY TAKE THE FORM OF CASH, REAL OR PERSONAL PROPERTY, WILLS, INSURANCE POLICIES, ANNUITIES, GRANTS, MEMORIALS, OR ANY OTHER FORM DESIGNATED BY THE PERSON GIVING. ANY AND ALL GIFTS RECEIVED BY THE FOUNDATION WILL BE TREATED AS TAX DEDUCTIBLE. SOME OF THE PLANNED PROJECTS OF THE FOUNDATION ARE: EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS AND CLINICS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AWARDS, SUPPORT OF COACHES' SPORTS GROUPS, SUPPORT OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS, SUPPORT OF FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES, AND SUPPORT OF MAKE-A-WISH. YOU MAY MAKE YOUR TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE FOUNDATION BY SENDING THE SAME TO ITS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT 801 W EAGLE RIDGE ST, SIOUX FALLS, SD 57108.

SOUTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL COACHES ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIPS

DAVE PROHL SCHOLARSHIP

AUGUST BARTHELS - WINNER

COACHES AGAINST CANCER SCHOLARSHIPS

AVA CRAVEN - WINNER, SOPHIA PESHONG - PIERRE, MADILYN WULF - OWANKA,
TRINITY BIETZ - TRIPP, TRENT GUTHMILLER - MENNO, NATHAN LEWIS - SIOUX FALLS
AUSTIN BLARE - WINNER, WILLIAM EWALT - ABERDEEN, KARLIE STIEFVATER - SALEM

2025 SD COACHES FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

KENADDE KOZAK - TYNDALL, JACK WAGONER - SIOUX FALLS, ABE STREITZ - FLANDREAU
NORA ROBB - SCOTLAND, JACE BLASIUS - WALL, KOLBY HOFER- HITCHCOCK

ROLL OF CHAMPIONS

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP COACHES 2024-2025

Cheer

- AA Eve Langerock, Harrisburg
- A Casie King, Sioux Valley

Dance

- AA Ashley Hoffman, Brandon Valley
- A Carey Baczwaski, Dakota Valley

Soccer

- Girls AA Hailee Fischer, Harrisburg
- Boys AA Alex Nelson, Sioux Falls Lincoln
- Girls A Ethan Poulter, Sioux Falls Christian
- Boys A Curt Nelson, Vermillion

Cross Country

- Girls AA Matt Genrich, Harrisburg
- Boys AA Luke Jelen, Sioux Falls Lincoln
- Girls A Luke Vander Leest, SF Christian
- Boys A Luke Vander Leest, SF Christian
- Girls B Stephanie McCord, Kimball/White Lake
- Boys B Ralph Kroetch, Philip

Football

- 11AAA Jared Fredenburg, Sioux Falls Lincoln
- 11AA John Hodorff, Watertown
- 11A Shawn Flanagan, Lennox
- 11B Trent Olson, Winner
- 9AA Jeff Sheehan, Hamlin
- 9A Pat Ruml, Howard
- 9B Tom Moore, Sully Buttes

Volleyball

- AA Ronette Costain, Harrisburg
- A Erica Fersdahl, Dell Rapids
- B Jean O'Hara, Chester Area

Gymnastics

- AA Audra Rew, Mitchell
- A Sherri Johnson, Estelline/Hendricks

Wrestling

- Girls Matt Thorson, Pierre
- Boys A Mike Abell, Sturgis
- Boys B Jeremy Swenson, Canton
- Dual A Mike Abell, Sturgis
- Dual B Jeremy Swenson, Canton

Basketball

- Girls AA Kent Kolsrud, O'Gorman
- Boys AA Craig Nelson, Brandon Valley
- Girls A Dan DeJong, Sioux Falls Christian
- Boys A Mike Schouten, Sioux Falls Christian
- Girls B Shawna Evans, Bennett County
- Boys B Paul Raasch, Castlewood

Tennis

- Girls AA Jason Olson, Rapid City Stevens
- Boys AA Chris Grant, St. Thomas More
- Girls A Matt Termansen, Harrisburg
- Boys A John Williams, Sioux Falls Christian

Golf

- Girls AA Kim Zimmerman, Aberdeen Central
- Boys AA Corey Neale, Watertown
- Girls A Brandon Kandolin, St. Thomas More
- Boys A Rodd Slater, Dakota Valley
- Girls B Blaine Bacon, St. Mary's
- Boys B Tate Schoenfelder, Hanson

Track & Field

- Girls AA Jim Jarovski, Sioux Falls Lincoln
- Boys AA Jim Jarovski, Sioux Falls Lincoln
- Girls A Luke Vander Leest, Sioux Falls Christian
- Boys A Luke Vander Leest, Sioux Falls Christian
- Girls B Samantha Kicks, Bennett County
- Boys B Chad Williamson, Coman-Egan

Softball

- AA Ed Whiting, Sioux Falls Jefferson
- A Heather Harden, West Central
- B Sarah Hagberg, Deuel

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC COACHES ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL COACH OF THE YEAR NOMINEES NOMINEES

Football

Steve Steele - Pierre

Girls' Basketball

Jamie Parish - SF Washington

Soccer

Luis Usera - Rapid City

Golf

Andrew Shaw - Rapid City

Boys' Basketball

Jeff Gruenhagen - DeSmet

Athletic Director

Paul Nepodal - Spearfish

NATIONAL FINALIST

Tennis

Pat Moller - Mitchell

Gymnastics

Les Coin - Sioux Falls

Volleyball

Linda DeBoer - Miller

Boys' Cross Country

Jason Wagoner - Sioux Falls

Girls' Cross Country

Jesse Coy - Rapid City

Assistant Girls' Sport

Steph Daly - Aberdeen

Wrestling

Lance Pearson - Rapid City

Boys' Track & Field

Misty Larson - Pierre

Girls' Track & Field

Rachelle DeBeer - Hendricks, MN

Hall of Fame

Arlin Likness - Yankton

Hall of Fame

Tom McGough - Miller

Distinguished Service

Forry Flaagon - Rapid City

NATIONAL WINNER

Assistant Boys' Sport

Craig Nowotny - Rapid City

COACH OF THE YEAR



Girl's Cross Country

Stephanie McCord - Kimball/White Lake

Coach McCord has been the head coach of the Kimball-White Lake Cross Country teams since 2017. She was an assistant track & field coach from 2017-2021 and became the Co-head Boys' and Girls' Track & Field Coach in 2022. She has been an SDCCTFCA Area Director for the past two years. The girls' cross-country team finished 5th place in Class B in 2017 and 2018 and won Class B state titles in 2020 and 2021, as well as the Combined Team Titles in both of those years with the boys' 6th and 5th place finishes. In 2023, the girls' team captured 5th place in Class A before returning to class B this year and winning the State Championship Title, as well as the Combined Team Title, in conjunction with the boys' 7th place team finish.



Boy's Cross Country

Ralph Kroetch - Philip

Coach Kroetch's high school coaching career began unexpectedly with cross country in the late 90s, leading to over two decades of remarkable success with Philip's Scotties. The teams have earned nine podium finishes, including three consecutive State Championships (2022-2024) for the boys and several top finishes for the girls, highlighted by 46 individual medalists and 79 varsity team wins. These accomplishments have garnered numerous accolades, such as the SDHSCA Victory Club, multiple Coach of the Year honors, and recognition as a leader in South Dakota cross-country excellence.

Cheer

Cassie King - Sioux Valley

Coach King recently concluded her 18th year as a head competitive cheer coach for Sioux Valley High School. She has been coaching at SVHS for 23 years as a volunteer coach, football, basketball and wrestling sideline coach. King has won eighteen State A Competitive Cheer Championships at Sioux Valley High School and a Spirit of Six award. King has led the SDHSAA Athletic All State Committee and contributed to rubric and scoresheet re-writes, judges' training, and has been actively involved with the SD Cheer Coaches Association, and the SDHSCA Cheer Coaches Conference.



COACH OF THE YEAR CONT.



Dance

Robyn Murphy - Yankton

Coach Murphy completed her 7th year as a high school competitive dance team coach in South Dakota. She spent four years at Sioux Falls Lincoln, leading her team to victories over dominant teams. At Platte-Geddes High School, she coached for two years, achieving 1st place in Pom and 2nd place in Grand Champion at the South Dakota Class A State Competition. In 2024, she concluded her first year at Yankton High School with two 1st place, six 2nd place, and ten 3rd place awards, finishing 3rd at the South Dakota State competition against 19 schools. She has choreographed routines for over 10 different high schools across South Dakota.



Girl's Soccer

Hailee Fischer - Harrisburg

Coach Fischer has been coaching soccer in South Dakota for six years, from youth to college levels across the state. She joined the Harrisburg Girls' High School Soccer team as an assistant coach in 2023 before becoming a head coach this season. Since serving as a coach, the team has amassed a 35-1 record in those two seasons. More so, in her first season as head coach, the team captured an undefeated 18-0 season, became back-to-back ESD and MAC champions, scored 63 goals with 10 different goal scorers while limiting opponents to only 2 goals scored during the season, and won their third straight AA HS Girls Soccer State Championship.

Boy's Soccer

Jory Wipf - James Valley Christian

Coach Wipf has coached soccer at James Valley Christian for 20 years, starting in 1999 and coaching until 2015, then returning in 2022. His career record is 200-97-23, with state titles in 2002 and 2010, and a runner-up finish in 2006. His teams have been consistent, having always made the state tournament or playoffs. This year's team had a 12-5 record, losing in the state final. James Valley was part of the initial transition to activities association sanctioned soccer and Coach Wipf has served as the class A representative on the soccer advisory committee.



COACH OF THE YEAR CONT.



Football

Pat Ruml - Howard

Coach Ruml has been coaching high school football in South Dakota for 30 years. He just finished his 17th year at Howard, where they won the Class 9A State Championship. This is his 4th state title with Howard in 7 championship appearances. He has compiled a 140-41 record with the Tigers and a career record of 149-80. Ruml has been a long-time member of SDHSCA and SDFBCA and currently serves on the football advisory board of SDHSAA and the Board of Directors for SDFBCA. Ruml has also coached in two All Star Games, as both an assistant and head coach.



Volleyball

Erica Fersdahl - Dell Rapids

Coach Fersdahl has been the head volleyball coach for the Dell Rapids Lady Quarriers for the past 6 seasons. The 2024 season marked several milestones for the Lady Quarriers. The team tallied a 32-3 season record, a first ever Dak XII Conference title, and the school's first ever Class A State Title. Fersdahl is an active member of the SDHSCA, the SDVBCA, and the AVCA.



Girl's Wrestling

Matt Thorson - Pierre

Matt Thorson has coached Girls' Wrestling at Pierre High School for eight years, leading the team to four state titles and three ESD championships. In the 2024-2025 season, his team went 9-0 in duals, had four state finalists, two state champions, and added four girls to the 100-win club. He's proud of how younger athletes stepped up after key graduations, while veterans led with consistency. Thorson aims to keep growing the program by recruiting new athletes and encouraging off-season training.

COACH OF THE YEAR CONT.



Boy's Wrestling

Donnie Bowden - Aberdeen Central

Donnie Bowden is the head coach of Aberdeen Central Boys' Wrestling, with 13 years of coaching experience, including eight as head coach. His team finished the 2024–25 season as State Individual and Dual Runner-Up, winning both the Region 3A and ESD Conference titles with a 24-2 dual record. Under his leadership, the program has earned multiple state, regional, and conference honors. Bowden continues to build a culture of excellence, discipline, and resilience at Aberdeen Central.



Gymnastics

Callie Aylward - Harrisburg

Callie Aylward has coached gymnastics at Harrisburg for four years, with 24 years of experience overall. She led the Tigers to their first-ever State Championship this year, breaking a 20-year-old state record with a team score of 152.983. Aylward's team also earned back-to-back Metro and ESD conference titles and six individual state titles. She's proud of how her athletes embraced a "team first" mentality, contributing to their success. A member of the South Dakota Coaches Association, Aylward is dedicated to fostering unity and team success.



Girl's Basketball

Matthew Rama - Mañpíya Lúta

Matthew Rama has coached girls' basketball at Mañpíya Lúta for 19 years, leading the team to an impressive record of 18 wins per season and six state tournament appearances. His teams have earned 67 All-Conference honors, 36 Academic All-State awards, and two State Academic Achievement Team Awards. This season, Rama's team finished undefeated in the regular season, won the Black Hills Conference title, and captured their fourth consecutive Lakota Nation Invitational championship. Rama also directs the K-12 Lakota Immersion Basketball Program, aiming to strengthen both basketball participation and the integration of Lakota language and culture into the sport.

COACH OF THE YEAR CONT.



Boy's Basketball

Paul- Raasch - Castlewood

Paul Raasch has coached boys' basketball for 39 years, including the last three at Castlewood High School. During his time there, he led the team to three straight State B appearances, capped off with a championship in 2025. He recently surpassed 600 career wins, ranking third all-time in South Dakota with a 621-261 record. Known for his teams' unselfish play and dedication, Coach Raasch continues to focus on hard work, teamwork, and representing his school with pride.



Girl's Track & Field

Samantha Hicks - Bennett County

Samantha Hicks has led the Bennett County track & field program for five years as head coach, guiding the girls' team to back-to-back Class B State Championships in 2024 and 2025. Her teams have also earned multiple region and meet titles, with the boys placing 5th at state in 2025. She's most proud of her athletes' dedication and selflessness, both in and out of season. A member of the Track & Field/Cross Country Coaches Association, Hicks aims to keep building on the program's success by pushing athletes to break records and compete for more state titles.



Boy's Track & Field

Chad Williamson - Colman-Egan

Chad Williamson has coached at Colman-Egan for eight seasons, leading the boys' track and field team to the 2025 Boys and Combined Team State Championships. He's proud of the many athletes who contributed to the team's success and the group's versatility across events. Williamson serves on the board of the South Dakota Football Coaches Association and is a member of the SD Cross Country and Track and Field Association. His focus remains on developing hardworking, team-oriented athletes.

COACH OF THE YEAR CONT.



Tennis

Kari Jensen - Vermillion

Kari Jensen has coached boys and girls tennis at Vermillion for eight seasons, leading both programs to strong growth and success. In 2024, her girls team finished 3rd at state and won the Dak-12 tournament, while two boys placed individually. Her teams have produced two state champions and several top-three finishes. Coach Jensen is active in coaching associations and mentors youth in tennis and basketball. She's grown the boys program from 5 to 31 players and is committed to promoting tennis as a fun, lifelong sport that builds valuable athletic skills.



Softball

Sarah Hagberg - Deuel

In Sarah Hagberg has coached softball at Deuel School for three years and has over 10 years of coaching experience. During her time at Deuel, the team has qualified for the State B Tournament each year, winning the championship in 2025 and the NEC Tournament in Redfield. She's most proud of the team's chemistry, strong work ethic, and standout performances this season. A member of the South Dakota Coaches Association, Hagberg is focused on continuing the program's success and inspiring young players to stay involved in the sport.



Girls' Golf

Karren Rogers - Miller

Karren Rogers has coached golf at Miller High School for seven seasons, leading the girls' team to five straight regional titles and four consecutive top-four state finishes, including back-to-back runner-up honors—the first in school history. The boys' team also broke a 50-year drought with a 7th-place state finish this year. Her athletes have earned nine individual state medals and multiple All-State honors, while both teams have consistently dominated in conference play. A member of the South Dakota High School Golf Coaches Association, Coach Rogers is proud of her athletes' growth, leadership, and integrity. She continues to focus on developing young talent and sustaining a strong, positive team culture.

COACH OF THE YEAR CONT.



Boy's Golf

Tiffany Benham - Pierre

Tiffany Benham has coached for 19 years, including the last 11 at T.F. Riggs High School and three leading the boys' golf team. Her teams have finished in the top three at state each year, including 2nd place in 2022 and 2024. This past season, her team shot a 273 (-15), the second-lowest score in state history, and five players earned All-State honors. The Governors also won the ESD Conference and were invited to the PGA National High School Invitational. Benham is a member of the South Dakota High School Golf Coaches Association and is proud of her team's leadership and consistent success.



Jr. High/Middle School Assistant Coach

Tera Koupal - Wagner

No Information Provided



Jr. High/Middle School Assistant Coach

Julia Barber - Dell Rapids

Julie Barber dedicated 27 years to coaching junior high volleyball at Dell Rapids Public School, leaving a lasting impact on the program. During her tenure, her teams won two junior high conference tournaments and consistently competed with enthusiasm and sportsmanship. She was especially proud of her final season, where the focus was on fun, growth, and celebrating wins with her players. As a member of the Volleyball Coaches Association, Julie remained committed to the development of young athletes throughout her career. This past season was bittersweet, marking her retirement from coaching. Her legacy is one of dedication, positivity, and a true love for the game.

COACH OF THE YEAR CONT.



Boys' Athletic Assistant Coach

Wade Rausch - Webster Area

No Information Provided

Boys' Athletic Assistant Coach

Brent Johnson - Tea Area

Brent Johnson has led the Tea Area High School football program for 10 years, guiding the team to two state titles and two runner-up finishes. He takes great pride in how his players responded to adversity this past season, showing resilience each week. Though the team fell short of a title, their determination stood out. Coach Johnson is a member of the South Dakota High School Coaches Association and the Football Coaches Association. His ongoing goal is to lead Tea Area to its first 11AA state championship.



Girls' Athletics Assistant Coach

Crystal Richter - Dell Rapids

Crystal Richter has spent 19 seasons leading the O'Gorman High School girls basketball program, building one of the most successful teams in the state. Under her leadership, O'Gorman has won four state championships (2017, 2022, 2024, 2025) and completed three undefeated seasons. She is most proud of how her team trusted one another, their coaches, and the process throughout this past season. Known for fostering strong team chemistry, Coach Richter emphasizes playing for each other and building lasting relationships. A member of the South Dakota High School Coaches Association, she is committed to helping her players grow both on and off the court. Her vision remains focused on developing confident, connected athletes who strive to reach their full potential.



COACH OF THE YEAR CONT.



Girls' Athletic Assistant Coach

Kaaren Huber -Sioux Falls Lincoln

No Information Provided

SPECIAL AWARDS



Athletic Director

Jordan Bauer, CMAA - Rapid City Central

Jordan Bauer, currently at Rapid City Central, previously served as Activities Director in Spearfish and has hosted 38 SDHSAA State Events. A past SDIAAA President and active SDHSAA committee member, he's been recognized as Region 8 AD (2021–2022), NIAAA State Award of Merit recipient, and 2025 South Dakota Athletic Director of the Year. With experience across all regions of South Dakota and a background in teaching, coaching, and the arts, he brings a well-rounded perspective to school activities.



Official

Steve Krier - Sioux Falls

Steve Krier's officiating career began in the 1990s when his friend Scott Fiedler invited him to a meeting with Colin Kapitan, sparking a 30-plus-year journey in football officiating. Throughout his career, he has officiated numerous high school and college playoff and championship games, and has had the privilege of working with a diverse group of officials, many of whom have become close friends. Steve has also cherished the opportunity to officiate games alongside his son, Trey, and is grateful for the friendships developed with school and state administrators who have contributed to his success. He acknowledges the roles of coaches, chain gangs, and various game-day staff in making every Friday and Saturday memorable. Steve extends his heartfelt gratitude to his wife, Ann, for her unwavering support and encouragement throughout this wonderful journey..

SPECIAL AWARDS

2025 "Jerry P. Miller" Distinguished Service Award

Given for outstanding contributions to high school athletics and dedication to the highest and best in high school athletics.

Michelle (Mickey) Everson

Aberdeen Central



Michelle "Mickey" Everson of Aberdeen, South Dakota, has devoted over 27 years to high school athletics at Aberdeen Central High School. She has served as Head Gymnastics Coach, Assistant Coach in gymnastics and competitive dance, and a vital supporter at athletic events in roles such as announcer, scorekeeper, and timer. Mickey was instrumental in launching the CHS Competitive Dance Team in 2007 and has volunteered extensively at state tournaments and community events through the American Legion Auxiliary. A two-time South Dakota Assistant Gymnastics Coach of the Year, she has coached numerous athletes to break school records. Her greatest impact lies in the positive influence she's had on generations of student-athletes, fostering teamwork, resilience, and a lasting love of sports.

Sam Holderby

Volga



Sam Holderby of Volga, South Dakota, has been a dedicated supporter of high school athletics through decades of service as a teacher, coach, athletic director, and school administrator. His career spanned several schools, including Arlington, Harold, Vermillion, and Sioux Valley, where he served from 1989 to 2001. Sam coached football, boys basketball, and track, and also contributed as a referee, public address announcer, and track meet worker. He has long been a reliable presence at state events, serving as a State Golf scorer for many years. His commitment to extracurricular programs earned him several honors, including the SDAEOP School Administrator of the Year and the SD Football Coaches Association Friend of Football Award. Sam's greatest impact lies in his unwavering support of high school athletics and his belief in the value these programs bring to students and communities.

SPECIAL AWARDS

2025 "Jerry P. Miller" Distinguished Service Award Continues

Given for outstanding contributions to high school athletics and dedication to the highest and best in high school athletics.



Laura Mitchell

Yankton

No Information Provided

SPECIAL AWARDS

Max Hawk Award

This award, in honor of Max Hawk, is to recognize and honor outstanding leadership, contributions and dedication of service to the South Dakota High School Coaches Association



Jason Olson

Rapid City

Coach Jason Olson, a graduate of Stevens High School and the University of Nebraska, has dedicated over three decades to coaching and teaching in Rapid City. He has led the Rapid City Stevens boys' and girls' tennis teams for 28 years, earning ten state championships and over 1,100 dual wins. Olson has also served as an assistant boys' basketball coach for 26 years and teaches 7th grade English at Southwest Middle School. His leadership extends beyond school sports—he directs the Rapid City Recreation Department's tennis program, organizes USTA tournaments, and volunteers extensively. Honored with numerous coaching awards and Hall of Fame inductions, Coach Olson continues to inspire youth through sports, education, and community service.

2024-2025

25 Year Coaching Award Winners

BILL KURTZ, CHAMBERLAIN, FOOTBALL

CLINTON NEVILLE, STANLEY COUNTY, WRESTLING

TERRY BECKER, PIERRE, BOYS' BASKETBALL

STEVE ERICKSON, EKLTON, BOYS' BASKETBALL

JESSICA LARSON, GETTYSBURG, CROSS COUNTRY & TRACK & FIELD

LUKE VANDER LEEST, SIOUX FALLS CHRISTIAN, TRACK & FIELD

SPECIAL AWARDS

Power of the Influence Award

This award, in honor of Bryan Brewer, is to recognize and honor the positive influence, vision, leadership, and dedication to promoting athletics, academics, and the arts among South Dakota students of all races. It represents the innovation, belief, and expectations that all are created equal.



Mary Tobacco

Pine Ridge

Mary Tobacco, daughter of Carolyn Catches Tobacco and Steven Standing Bear Tobacco, was born and raised on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and graduated from Red Cloud Indian School. A lifelong athlete and coach, she played basketball at Huron University and later began her coaching journey at Red Cloud under Dusty LeBeaux, mentored by Br. Denny Ryan. With Wayne Carney, she co-founded the Officials Project, training local sports officials and elevating the integrity of athletics on Pine Ridge. Mary has coached at every level and now leads her grandson's middle school team, drawing on her professional background in human services to inspire leadership and hope. A dedicated advocate for education, community, and youth, Mary is honored to receive an award named after Bryan Brewer and expresses deep gratitude for those who empower others through sport.



Dusty LeBeaux

Pine Ridge

No Information Provided

COACHES RING OF HONOR

The Coaches Ring of Honor celebrates the legacy and impact of coaches who have shaped lives through their dedication and leadership. This special recognition, organized by the SDHSCA, honors coaches nominated by former athletes, colleagues, or community members. Honorees are recognized on the SDHSCA website, in the biannual newsletter, and in the Hall of Fame program. A commemorative certificate is also presented, making this a meaningful tribute to both living and posthumous coaches. Tonight, we proudly honor those whose influence continues to inspire.



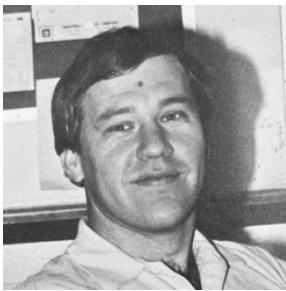
WAYNE CARNEY
NOMINATED BY:
 VIRG POLAK



GEORGIA ADOLPH
NOMINATED BY:
 VIRG POLAK



JOHN BUNKERS
NOMINATED BY:
 VIRG POLAK



DENIS LATHER
NOMINATED BY:
 VIRG POLAK



JEROME GARRY
NOMINATED BY:
 VIRG POLAK



MAX HAWK
NOMINATED BY:
 VIRG POLAK

COACHES RING OF HONOR CONT.



GENE BROWNELL
NOMINATED BY:
BRUCE KLEINSASSER



KENT ANDERSON
NOMINATED BY:
CHAD EISENBRAUN



JERRY P. MILLER
NOMINATED BY:
VIRG POLAK & BILL WEBER



DAN MITCHELL
NOMINATED BY:
VIRG POLAK



JOHN BUTTERFIELD
NOMINATED BY:
LARRY AAKER



MEL DUTTON
NOMINATED BY:
BRYAN CARMICHAEL



DOUG SCHAUER
NOMINATED BY:
BRYAN CARMICHAEL



RANDI FAETH
NOMINATED BY:
BRYAN CARMICHAEL



CRAIG NESS
NOMINATED BY:
BRYAN CARMICHAEL

COACHES RING OF HONOR CONT.



VIRG POLAK
NOMINATED BY:
BILL WEBER



DAVE PROHL
NOMINATED BY:
JIM DORMAN



BILL WEBER
NOMINATED BY:
VIRG POLAK & GEORGIA
ADOLPH



DAN AAKER
NOMINATED BY:
LARRY AAKER

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

2025 Special Olympics South Dakota Outstanding Awards

Volunteers do everything there is to do for Special Olympics and more. You are fundraisers, cheerleaders, administrators, chauffeurs, chaperones, trainers, coaches, policymakers, trash collectors, referees, food servicers, score keepers, and everything in between. You serve without a salary, recognition, honors, or awards. Special Olympics would not exist without you - your dedication, work or love.

Thank you, volunteers. You represent the highest values of the human spirit and we are grateful for your service.



Don Baker Award

Lucas & Levi Wienk - Sioux Falls

This is the highest honor presented by Special Olympics South Dakota. It is given in honor of Don Baker who was a volunteer and official starter for Special Olympics events.

This award is given annually to an individual, organization, business, or agency that has given outstanding support to Special Olympics South Dakota.



Spirit of a Champion

Trevor Hayer - Aberdeen

Presented to the Special Olympics South Dakota athlete who has demonstrated the true spirit, courage, sharing, and joy of Special Olympics.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Lyle Farrand Award - Volunteer of the Year



Track & Field - Canton

This award is given in honor of Lyle Farrand of Sioux Falls. In 1968, Farrand was instrumental in starting Special Olympics South Dakota. This award is given to an individual who has had a positive impact on Special Olympics South Dakota.



Unity Award

Brooklyn Koll - Sioux Falls Roosevelt

This award is presented to a Unified partner, individual, or entity that promotes inclusion for people with an intellectual disability. The nominee should actively promote acceptance and understanding for all.

DJ Mertens - "Champion" Award

Black Hills State University - Spearfish

This award is given in honor of DJ Mertens who was instrumental in establishing and growing SOSD. This award is presented to a business, organization, or media outlet that has made a major contribution to Special Olympics South Dakota.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS



Ron Stewart Award- Coach of the Year

Kelsey Klosterman - Brooking All-Stars

This award is given in honor of Ron Stewart of Rapid City who was a Special Olympics Coach for over 25 years. The recipient of this award has given his/her time to encourage Special Olympics athletes to achieve their fullest potential.



Family Award

Lassegard Family - Rapid City Flame

This award is presented to a family who demonstrates unique and outstanding support for Special Olympics South Dakota.

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

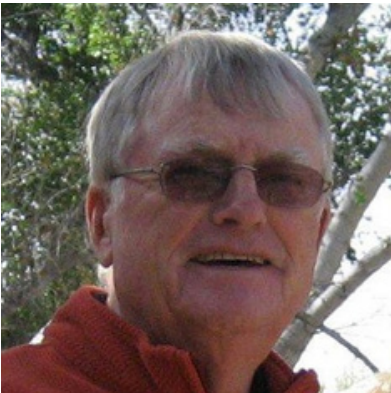
The Hall of Fame is the highest award given by the SDHSCA. This award is designed to recognize SDHSCA members for years of coaching tenure in South Dakota high schools, for dedication to the SDHSCA and for outstanding coaching accomplishments. A coach can be either active or inactive and be eligible for the Hall of Fame.



Jerome Garry

Madison

Garry, a 1975 Garretson High School graduate, was a multi-sport athlete who continued his football career at South Dakota State University. He began a 40-year teaching and coaching career in 1979 at O'Gorman High School and later led programs at Madison and Lourdes High Schools. As a football coach, he contributed to six state championships and compiled a 74-66 record as Madison's head coach. His greatest coaching success came in track and field, where he led Madison to multiple state titles and coached champions at all three schools. Garry also served as Executive Director of the National High School Athletic Coaches Association and earned numerous honors, including national and state Coach of the Year awards.



Gerald (Jay) Hennies

Vermillion

Gerald "Jay" Hennies, a Wagner, SD native, devoted nearly 40 years to coaching and education in South Dakota. A graduate of Wagner High School ('61) and USD ('65, MA '68), he coached basketball, tennis, football, and track at schools in Chicago, Platte, Vermillion, and USD. Jay was named 1989 Coach of the Year by the SDHSCA and SD Sportswriters and coached the South All-Star Team that same year. He is a member of multiple halls of fame, including USD and SD Basketball. Known for creating a positive atmosphere, Jay inspired countless student-athletes and remains a respected mentor in the coaching community.



Cindy Nelson

Webster Area

Cindy Nelson coached in South Dakota for 27 years, leading Webster Area's volleyball program to an impressive 567-274-9 record. Her teams won four State B championships and were runners-up twice, with multiple top finishes in both State B and State A tournaments. Nelson's leadership also brought seven Northeast Conference titles to Webster. A dedicated contributor to high school athletics, she served as SDVBCA President, coordinated all-conference selections, and played a key role in bringing volleyball into the SDHSCAA All-Star Games. Her contributions earned her numerous honors, including the 1988 North Region Volleyball Coach of the Year, the 2007 Distinguished Service Award, and the prestigious Ralph Ginn Award in 2011.

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



Kim Nelson

Sioux Falls

Kim Nelson has devoted over 40 years to coaching high school football and track in South Dakota. A graduate of Lake Benton High School, he earned degrees from Dakota State University and SDSU. He served as head football coach at Milbank, RC Central, SF Washington, and SF Roosevelt, mentoring athletes like Adam Vinatieri and Anders Lee. Kim has received multiple Coach of the Year honors and held key leadership roles in the SDFBCA. His dedication to teamwork and character development has left a lasting impact on student-athletes across the state.



Jeff Van Leur

Emery

Jeff VanLeur, originally from Woonsocket, South Dakota, has dedicated 46 years to coaching at Emery High School, where he continues to serve as head football and track coach, and athletic director. A 1980 graduate of Sioux Falls College, he holds a degree in Physical Education with minors in Social Science and Industrial Arts. Jeff has also coached basketball in various roles and has inspired generations of student-athletes through his leadership and mentorship. He has received numerous honors, including the 2007-08 Football Coach of the Year, the 2022 SDHSAA Distinguished Service Award, and was a NHSACA Coach of the Year finalist in 2019 and 2023. Inducted into the SDFBCA Hall of Fame in 2014, Jeff is known for his positive impact on both athletics and the lives of his students.



Bill Weber

Watertown

Bill Weber, a Strandburg native and 1985 Northern State University graduate, dedicated 35 years to coaching high school athletics in South Dakota. He coached football, track, and basketball at schools including Rosholt, Veblen, Mitchell, and Watertown. Inspired by his own coaches, Bill became a respected leader, serving as President of both the SDHSCA and SDFBCA and earning honors such as the Max Hawk Award and National Assistant Coach of the Year. His legacy reflects a deep commitment to student-athletes, always striving to help them reach their full potential.

PARTNERS

Thank you to our generous sponsors for their continued support of the South Dakota High School Coaches Association. Your commitment helps us recognize and empower coaches across the state, making a lasting impact on student-athletes and communities alike.



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The South Dakota Army National Guard has a proud 159-year history of service to the state and nation. Since its origins in 1862 as part of the Dakota Territory, the SDARNG has served in nearly every major U.S. war or conflict since the Civil War. In addition, natural disasters have called forth the SDARNG's spirit of teamwork and sacrifice to battle floods, fires, blizzards, and tornado destruction. The 1972 Rapid City Flood, 1998 Spencer Tornado, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, the 2011 Missouri River Flood, and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic are just a few historical examples of when the SDARNG mobilized to help its fellow South Dakotans and Americans in times of need.

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