



# 2025 Award Recipients

**WELLNESS**

**SPORTSMANSHIP**

**COACHES' EDUCATION**

**LEADERSHIP**

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**





## 2024-2025 MIAA Award Recipients

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*Recognizing excellence in academics, athletics and student leadership  
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*In grateful appreciation of outstanding service and unselfish devotion to interscholastic athletics  
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# MIAA Student-Athlete of the Month Award

*Recognizing excellence in academics, athletics and student leadership*



**September 2024**

**Chelsea Foley, Ware Jr./Sr. High School**

Chelsea is a standout soccer player for the Indians while maintaining a 4.3 GPA and being ranked 3rd in her class. She was nominated by Ware High School Athletic Director, Thomas Shamgochian.

As a six-year varsity soccer player and starter for Ware, she became a captain this year and serves as a great role model for her teammates. Chelsea is very active in Student Council, National Honor Society, National Spanish Honor Society and is the President of National Art Honor Society.

This year, Chelsea hosted her second annual “Gold Night” at Ware Jr./Sr. High School. Similar to last year, Chelsea set-up and managed the event from start to finish.



**September 2024**

**Christopher Acosta, East Boston High School**

Chris is a standout soccer player for the Jets while maintaining a 3.9 GPA. He was nominated by his soccer coach, Jayson Smith.

As a three year varsity soccer player and starter for Eastie, he has exemplified what it means to be a true student-athlete. **His coach commented that “His unwavering commitment to both academics and athletics sets him apart from his peers. His determination is not just about personal success; he is motivated by a desire to be the first in his family to graduate from college, inspiring those around him to strive for their goals as well.”**

Beyond his academic and athletic achievements, Chris is known for his strong moral compass and kind-hearted nature.

In addition to his academic and athletic success, Chris has served as a translator at East Boston High School Open House and Parent Teacher Conferences. He also was a Team Leader at the EBHS Christmas Elves Event; organizing a toy drive for children in the community.



## October 2024

### Rachel Egan, Watertown High School

Rachel was nominated by Watertown High School Athletic Director Ryan Murphy. A multisport athlete for the Raiders, Rachel has also excelled in the classroom. Rachel is a high honor roll student and has achieved academic excellence in all three years; having a 4.0-plus grade point average every term each year. Rachel has also received the Saint Michael's College Book Award for Academic Achievement and Social Conscience. This is awarded for students' academic success and exemplary community service involvement. Rachel is also currently taking several AP and Honors-level classes.

Rachel has also made a great impact on her community by serving in several different capacities to assist others. Whether it is volunteering at youth Field Hockey Clinics every **Saturday in the Fall**, or **dedicating numerous hours for the town's learn-to-skate program**, Rachel has been a mentor for the next generation of athletes. Not limited to athletics, Rachel is also invested in the arts in her school as she volunteered for school plays in the 10th grade and managed ticket sales and greeted guests at the theater.



## October 2024

### Jake Attaway, Hudson High School

Nominated by Hudson High School Athletic Director Jessica Winders, Jake is described as **"one of the best young men to ever attend Hudson High School."** She continued, **"There is no one more deserving of this honor than Jake Attaway as he is a terrific young man, talented athlete, and role model for our students."**

As an athlete, Jake has had a stellar career in his three sports. This Fall, Jake has led the Hudson football team to an undefeated season and a great seed in the state tournament. **Winders wrote, "Jake has been an impact athlete since entering his 9th grade year at HHS (2021-22). His immediate impact was felt during football, he was starting QB which is unheard of and single handedly turned this program around. He is a quiet kid, a quiet leader, who minds his own business and leads by example. He has gone on to be a true competitor in basketball, baseball and now track and field (a move he made last spring to improve his quickness and strength for football). I realize this isn't about his previous accolades but it is worth mentioning that in his first year with the track and field program he was a league all-star, league champion as part of the 4x100m relay, and placed 7th at D5 states in javelin. Jake was a 1st team all-star for basketball as well."**

In the classroom, Jake is taking three honors and two AP courses and has a current GPA of 3.82. He is an excellent student with a near perfect attendance record and a consistent member of the honor roll. Finally, as a member of the senior class, Jake helps out with HHS Boosters, volunteers at the snack shack and helps to run youth football clinics in town. It is evident that the next generation of student-athletes in Hudson look up to Jake and emulate his talent, work ethic, and sportsmanship.





## November 2024

### Jason Fournier, Leicester High School

As Coach Everett said in his nomination, “Jason has demonstrated academic leadership and excellence at Leicester High School. He holds two major leadership positions within the Class of 2025. First, Jason’s leadership and personality have led to his election as the Class of 2025’s class treasurer over the last three consecutive years. I have seen Jason’s leadership skills personally through his role as a member of the National Honor Society. Here, he utilized his experience in both cross country and track to create and coordinate a 5K road race at Leicester High School in May 2024. In this role, he organized a team of juniors to solicit donations and create a 5K course. All proceeds of this race went to the Leicester High School Boosters Club. The 5K event raised about \$2,000.”

Academically, Jason is near the top of his class. He ranks 9th overall and 5th amongst male seniors. He has entered his senior year with a challenging workload which includes AP Calculus and a college level English course. Despite this heavy workload, he is currently set to earn High Honor Roll.



## November 2024

### Ainsley Kearney, West Springfield High School

Ainsley was nominated by West Springfield Athletic Director Glenn Doulette, who stated that Ainsley is “an outstanding representative of our school community and a role model for other athletes.”

As a student-athlete, Ainsley has had to overcome injuries, including ACL and shoulder surgeries but still managed to be a leader for her teams. She was all-league in field hockey and lacrosse in 2023 and 2024, and also won the Rookie of the Year Award, Coaches Award and MVP in field hockey during her career. She also is an MIAA Student Ambassador and captain of the field hockey and lacrosse teams.

As a student, Ainsley is ranked No. 2 in her class of 257 students. A consistent member of the Honor Roll and National Honor Society member, Ainsley also was selected to the MSFHCA Academic All-Star Team in 2023. Winning team Academic Awards for Field Hockey and Lacrosse, she was also a member of the Irish Club for four years. Ainsley was elected Class of 2025 President for two years and Secretary for one year.

As a strong community member, Ainsley championed the campaign for raising money to benefit Morgan’s Message (Mental Health for Athletes) and assisted with local charities Rays Of Hope and the Holyoke Veterans Home. Both of these efforts raised well over \$1,000 for each charity.



## **December 2024**

### **Will Conklin, Danvers High School**

A Danvers High School standout in cross-country and track, Will has been nominated by Athletic Director Drew Betts for his exceptional athletic and academic achievements, as well as his active community involvement.

A three-sport captain for Cross Country, Indoor Track, and Outdoor Track, Will played a pivotal role in the DHS Boys Cross Country team's historic 2023 State Championship victory. A five-year varsity athlete, he has garnered All-Conference, All-State, and numerous individual team awards. Furthermore, he and three teammates qualified for a national 4x1600m relay event. His accomplishments were recognized with the December 2024 Moynihan Lumber Athlete of the Month Award.

Academically, Will has consistently achieved honor or high honor roll status throughout high school, challenging himself with Advanced Placement courses. His combined academic and athletic excellence has earned him a commitment to run for the UMass-Lowell River Hawks.

Will is an active member of the school community, participating in the DECA program and the Captains Collaborative program, which focuses on developing leadership skills. Athletic Director Betts praised Will, stating, "In my two years at Danvers High School, Will has consistently stood out. His humble and hard-working nature was evident from our first meeting. He leads by example and truly embodies the definition of a student-athlete. His dedication has earned him the opportunity to compete at UMass-Lowell."



## **January 2025**

### **Elizabeth Sanders, Nauset Regional High School**

Nominated by Track Coach Moira Nobili, Elizabeth Sanders is a tremendous student-athlete for the Warriors. Liz has excelled on the Soccer, Indoor and Outdoor Track Teams, combining her athletic prowess with her academic achievements and community service.

As an athlete, Liz has participated on the Varsity Soccer Team since her freshmen year and was awarded the 2023 Sportsmanship Award Winner for Cape and Islands League and the 2023 Nauset Coaches Award. She has also been a tremendous team member on the Indoor and Outdoor Track Teams since her freshman year.

As a student, Liz has enrolled in a schedule including AP Language, AP US History, Honors Chemistry, AP Civics and Government, Honors Physics, Honors Civics and Government, Algebra II, Biotechnology, American Sign Language III, Intro to Business, Yoga, Sports & Entertainment Marketing, Clay, Art and Relaxation. In addition, Liz has utilized American Sign Language during her summer work at a toy store in Chatham to speak to clients.

Finally, Liz has also been active member of the Nauset community as she is a member of the National Honor Society where she gave tours to students and parents on open house and curriculum nights. In her role on the Student Council Liz has been vital in completing fundraising events for the class of 2025 bake sales, turkey trot, and the Valentine roses sale. Liz is a Nauset Student Ambassador and a peer mentor for students interested in Nauset High School. Students from local middle schools and transfers shadow Liz during the school day at Nauset.



## January 2025

### Josh Henry, Danvers High School

Josh Henry, a senior at Danvers High School, has consistently been a high honor roll student throughout his school years. He is currently enrolled in 4 AP courses and is a DECA Class Officer. He is involved with several other groups at DHS and is considered one of the strongest leaders in the school building. Athletic Director Drew Betts commented, **“As a leader in the building he gets himself involved with every opportunity available and consistently goes above and beyond to support each and every program.”**

**Athletically, Josh is involved with the Falcons’ Golf, Boys Ice Hockey, and Baseball programs.** He is a two-year captain for hockey and baseball and has received a number of accolades in both sports. This past season, he was a leading scorer for defense in the North Shore and has helped the team to MIAA Tournament appearances the past four seasons.

Josh is a DECA Class Officer, participated in the Danvers High School Captain's Collaborative, and engages in everything he possibly can to help support his peers and fellow student athletes. He supported the Polar Plunge on Super Bowl Sunday to support homelessness.



## February 2025

### Marco Geminiani, Mansfield High School

Marco Geminiani of Mansfield High School is recognized for his exceptional achievements in academics, athletics, and community involvement. Nominated by Assistant Athletic Director Michael Redding, Marco's leadership and dedication have earned him this prestigious award.

Marco boasts a 4.4 weighted GPA, consistently achieving High Honor Roll and excelling in eight AP courses. He is a member of the National and Spanish Honor Societies, a Stonehill College Book Award recipient, and an AP Scholar with Honors.

A three-sport athlete, Marco earned Hockomock League All-Star status in soccer and indoor/outdoor track. He captained the indoor track team and received Most Improved Awards in both indoor and outdoor track. He also was a Sun Chronicle All-Star in the 600 and 800 meter runs.

Beyond athletics and academics, Marco serves as Senior Class Vice President, participates in the Student Voice Summit and Prom Committee, and is a member of the Spanish, French, and World Travel Clubs. He is an MIAA Student Ambassador, a musician, a Congregational Church volunteer, and a Special Olympics soccer coach.

Assistant Athletic Director Redding praises Marco as a "role model" who excels in academics, athletics, and extracurriculars, stating, **“We often wonder how he is able to accomplish so much and do it so well, with only 24 hours in a day.”**



## February 2025

### Alexandra Eastman, Sandwich High School

Nominated by Coach Wendy Pierce, Alexandra Eastman excels in Cross Country, Swimming, and Track, maintaining a 4.1 GPA. A dual-sport captain, she's a dedicated teammate and consistently strives for excellence.

Her transcript reveals a student that challenges herself throughout the school year. Lexi has taken 6 AP courses: Chemistry, English Language & Composition, World History, Biology, Calculus, Psychology and several Honors-level courses: English 9 & 10, Geometry, Spanish 2, 3, & 4; Precalculus., Biology and Chemistry. The amazing part of the academic journey is that Lexi's transcript is an astonishing all A's. To date, she has not received a grade lower than A-.

In addition to the above accolades and accomplishments, Lexi is a servant to her community and involved in numerous activities. Among the highlights are her involvement with the Key Club and the National Honor Society where Lexi has taken part in multiple community events and fundraisers. Through GLASSS (Girls Leadership Academy for Service and Sports) and the Leadership and Community Service Trip, Lexi went to Costa Rica for 10 days as a Junior to participate in service projects. She has participated in many fundraisers for various charities (cancer, hunger, athletics) and constantly displays leadership. She also volunteers in a first grade classroom and is a lifeguard and swim instructor for the Town of Barnstable where she has worked for the last three summers.



## March 2025

### Alyse Mutti, North Reading High School

Alyse was nominated by her coach, Michelle Roach. A three-sport athlete at North Reading Alyse excels at Field Hockey, Ice Hockey, and Softball while maintaining a 3.84 GPA.

As an athlete, Alyse has played a sport in every season but her true love is ice hockey where she attained great accolades. She set program records in the following categories: fewest goals allowed in a single season (16), most shutouts in a single season (11), most career shutouts (32), and most career wins (62). This past season she was also named the Boston Globe Player of the Week (week of February 10) and the North Reading High School Winter Sports MVP. As a great achievement, Alyse allowed the fewest goals for all MIAA girls' and boys' divisions, and was nominated for Massachusetts State Hockey Coaches' Association All-Star game and Cross-Border All-Star Challenge (vs. CT All-Stars).

In addition to her great academic and athletic accomplishments, Alyse also volunteers at the Lynnfield Fire Department to learn the skills and competencies required of firefighters and paramedics. She has been on calls with the department to observe and has earned the appropriate certifications as necessary (CPR, First Aid). Alyse has also fundraised for Special Olympics and completed the Polar Plunge. Finally Alyse has been a volunteer coach for a youth hockey team.





## March 2025

### Drew Alsup, Central Catholic High School

As a student, Drew has a weighted GPA of 4.69 on a 4.5 scale and is a member of the National Honor Society. This year, he took 3 AP courses (Biology, Economics and Calculus BC) and has taken 6 in his career at CCHS. Drew has also taken three Dual Enrollment classes and been the recipient of the Principal's Award, Achieved High Honor Roll and the Football Scholar Award.

A 4-year athlete and captain on the football, indoor and outdoor track teams, Drew has been named Boston Herald Preseason EMass Football All-Star Honorable Mention and a Fall 2025 Boston Globe All-Scholastic player. From 2023-2025 Drew was named MVC Football Team All-Conference. In 2024, Drew was named MVC Outdoor Track 2nd Team All-Conference for his accomplishments in Javelin, Pole Vault, 200m and 400m.

A servant to the community, Drew has also volunteered several hours at Lazarus House serving meals to those in need and participated in the 31 miles for 31 hours for Boston Children's Hospital.

**As Casey Grange said in his nomination, "Drew is a true student-athlete. He works extremely hard in the classroom and on the football field and track. There is never a question of what we will get when Drew commits to something - it's always his best. He is a quiet leader who leads by example and is as humble as they come. Drew simply puts his head down and gets to work to make himself and the people around him better but he also is the first to celebrate his teammates' successes."**



## April 2025

### Amelia Spencer, Winthrop High School

A formidable three-sport athlete throughout her high school career, Amelia has demonstrated outstanding leadership and skill. She is a captain of the Winthrop Varsity Ice Hockey team, where she has been a starter since her freshman year. Last year, she was named NEC All-Star in hockey. As a senior captain, she led her team to three conference titles in four years. Her impressive performance as a defenseman includes averaging over a point per game.

Beyond the rink, Amelia has played varsity soccer as a goalie and served as a two-time team captain on the varsity softball team. Her athletic involvement extends to leadership roles as a Bay State Games Student Ambassador, a Morgan's Message Ambassador, an MIAA Student Ambassador, and a member of the MIAA Student Advisory Committee. In recognition of her leadership, she received the Leadership Award for the varsity softball team.

Amelia's commitment extends far beyond the classroom and athletic fields. She has been actively involved in numerous school organizations, serving as Sophomore Class Videographer, Junior and Senior Class President, and Executive Board President. For all four years of high school, she has been a member of the student government, student council, the social committee, debate club, math club, and wellness club.

Her dedication to community service is equally impressive. Since December 2020, she has volunteered with Learn to Skate. For the past four summers, she has completed an internship with the North Shore Navigators. Additionally, she has volunteered nearly every Sunday at Winarc since 2023, and coaches for the Winthrop Skating Association on Wednesdays from January to March. Last year, she also served as a camp counselor at the Winthrop Little League Camp in April and July.



## April 2025

### Ryan O'Byrne, Belmont High School

Belmont High School Athletic Director Adam Pritchard stated in his nomination, "Ryan is one of the most talented and dedicated athletes at BHS and would be a terrific selection and representation for Belmont High School."

Academically, Ryan is an Honor Roll student with an overall B+ average. As a senior, Ryan is enrolled in AP Environmental Science and three other Honors courses, including Honors Statistics and a course focused on Social Justice. Varsity Baseball Coach Jim Brown considers Ryan "...one of the best to come through BHS for baseball."

A three-sport athlete (football, basketball, and baseball) throughout his high school career, a shoulder injury during football sidelined him until March, shortening his athletic seasons this year. However, Ryan diligently rehabbed his injury and was ready for the baseball season. Coach Brown praised Ryan, stating, "Senior Captain Ryan O'Byrne has been instrumental in turning around the Belmont Marauder baseball season with his performance on and off the field. He truly leads by example, and his teammates look up to him."

Off the field, Ryan is a strong leader and mentor, encouraging teammates to volunteer for youth clinics and assisting with Christmas tree loading and unloading at the local Lions Club during the holiday season. Ryan is a team-first player and remains humble.



## May 2025

### Alexa Piazza, Canton High School

An avid and accomplished runner, Alexa was nominated by Athletic Director Danny Erickson **who stated she, "is everything we strive for in Canton Athletics; she is hard-working, shows great sportsmanship, and a tremendous student. Alexa is poised to have a great senior year."**

As a student, Alexa has a 4.8 GPA on a weighted 4.0 scale while consistently achieving **straight A's in her courses**. Enrolled in the most demanding courses offered at Canton High School, Alexa has shown great success in the sciences. Although she hopes to pursue a business major in college, Alexa also loves the engineering field and has had great interest in this field. Her teachers often comment on her drive and determination in not only learning the material but mastering the material at-hand. A true student and leader in the classroom, Alexa has a very positive path ahead of her.

**Alexa's athletic success has come from great performances in Indoor Track and Cross Country** at Canton High School. A Hockomock All Star in both sports, Alexa is looking forward to a summer of training and another successful season during her senior year.

In addition to her great accomplishments in the classroom and as a runner, Alexa has dedicated herself to many community causes. She has volunteered at the Clark School for **the Deaf, worked with "Above the Clouds" (an organization that supplies flights for children with illnesses)**, served at a local food pantry, and been a mentor and volunteer at the elementary schools on numerous occasions.



## May 2025

### Lucas Andrade, Brockton High School

Lucas Andrade's time at Brockton High School illustrates how dedication and support can transform a student athlete's trajectory. During his freshman year, Lucas struggled to engage with academics and did not participate in sports. However, his sophomore year marked a turning point. Bolstered by the faculty and coaches at Brockton High, and with constant encouragement from his family, Lucas joined the track team. This decision proved to be a catalyst for change.

Over the subsequent three years, Lucas underwent a profound metamorphosis, not only establishing himself as the best track and field hurdler in state history but also significantly improving his grades. His athletic prowess culminated this year when he broke the MIAA Indoor and New England records in the 55 hurdles, culminating in a third-place finish and All-American recognition at the National Championships. He also achieved back-to-back "triple crown" victories and set new Massachusetts and New England records in the 110 Hurdles.

More significantly, Lucas's academic performance blossomed. Embracing the importance of education, he earned an athletic scholarship to the University of Rhode Island. This dual transformation, both athletic and academic, stands as an inspiring example for the entire Brockton student body.

Outside of his personal achievements, Lucas actively mentors the next generation by volunteering with the Brockton youth track club, passing on his invaluable knowledge and skills. With the strong backing of his family, Lucas embodies what it means to be a Boxer Success Story.



# Harry Agganis Student-Athlete of the Year Scholarship

*Recognizing excellence in character, leadership and community service*



**Ainsley Kearney**  
West Springfield High School



**Lucas Andrade**  
Brockton High School

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association is proud to announce that the Harry Agganis Student-Athlete of the Year Award recipients for 2024-2025 are Ainsley Kearney of West Springfield High School and Lucas Andrade of Brockton High School. Ainsley and Lucas exemplify the true meaning of successful student-athletes as they are great leaders and teammates as well as involved community members.

## **Ainsley Kearney, West Springfield High School**

As a student-athlete, Ainsley has had to overcome injuries, including ACL and shoulder surgeries but still managed to be a leader for her teams. She was all-league in field hockey and lacrosse in 2023 and 2024, and also won the Rookie of the Year Award, Coaches Award and MVP in field hockey during her career. She also is an MIAA Student Ambassador and captain of the field hockey and lacrosse teams.

As a student, Ainsley is ranked second in her class of 257 students. A consistent member of the Honor Roll and National Honor Society member, Ainsley also was selected to the MSFHCA Academic All-Star Team in 2023. Winning team Academic Awards for Field Hockey and Lacrosse, she was also a member of the Irish Club for four years. Ainsley was elected Class of 2025 President for two years and Secretary for one year. As a strong community member, Ainsley championed the campaign for raising money to benefit Morgan's Message (Mental Health for Athletes) and assisted with our local charities (Rays Of Hope and the Holyoke Veterans Home). Both of these efforts raised well over \$1,000 for each charity.

## **Lucas Andrade, Brockton High School**

Lucas Andrade is a shining example of the success student athletes can achieve when they take advantage of opportunities. In his first year at Brockton High School, Lucas did not participate in Track and his grades in the classroom were less than stellar. However, it was during his sophomore year, that he realized he had potential as a student and as an athlete. Through the support of the great faculty and coaches at Brockton High School, and with the continued support and encouragement from his family, Lucas joined the Track team; a decision that changed everything. Over the next three years, Lucas has not only become the best track and field hurdler in state history, but also improved his grades and earned great academic opportunities.

The MIAA congratulates Ainsley, who will be attending the University of New England and Lucas, who will be attending the University of Rhode Island.





## NFHS Spirit of Sport Award Massachusetts Recipient



Courtesy Daniel Libon/Catholic Memorial

### Jack Aalto

Catholic Memorial School

*For exemplifying the ideals of the positive spirit of sport that represent the core mission of education-based athletics*

Jack Aalto is a sophomore at Catholic Memorial and has attended the school since seventh grade. Jack has been an honors student each year and is currently taking Algebra II Honors, English 10 Honors, Western Civilization Honors, and Spanish 3, along with Sophomore Theology and Chemistry.

Jack is an exceptional student, achieving First Honors each semester and has participated on the State Champion **Speech & Debate Team at CM, achieving 'state finalist'** multiple times in speech competitions.

Jack was diagnosed with a heart defect at age 3, and was told early on that at some point in the future he would need a heart transplant. Jack continued through his childhood years, and early adolescent years as a normal boy, going to school, playing sports, making friends, and being involved in the school community.

When Jack was in the 7th and 8th grades at Catholic Memorial, he played on the middle school hockey teams, as well as Parkway Youth Hockey town teams. As Jack was graduating from eighth grade, his team of heart doctors told **him that his "hockey playing days were over" with the** concern for the physical contact nature of hockey. Jack was devastated to say the least.

The Varsity Hockey Coach at Catholic Memorial, approached Jack and his parents and asked if Jack would be the Varsity Hockey Student-Manager for the next 4 years. Jack was thrilled and the following year, as a freshman, Jack served in this role, helping to handle all equipment needs, game management of score sheets, and providing leadership and team spirit within the team. He was a terrific addition to the team, earning his first varsity letter.

**At the end of Jack's freshman year, the team of heart doctors met with him and his parents and explained the need to begin the heart transplant process that would require staying at Boston Children's Hospital during the summer of 2024, for a heart donation to become available.**

**Jack went to Boston Children's Hospital in late June and received his heart transplant on August 22, 2024. Jack would spend another four weeks at Boston Children's Hospital in recovery and is now back in the classroom at Catholic Memorial thriving and serving as "lead" student-manager for the varsity ice hockey team.**

**While Jack was in Boston Children's Hospital, he tutored other patients who were waiting for a transplant or being cared for at the hospital. Jack also volunteers through Rose's Bounty, assisting those in need in the Greater Boston community.**

On Tuesday, December 31, 2024, the Catholic Memorial ice hockey team played Arlington High School, just a few days before Jack was preparing to return to school on January 6, 2025. At this game, Catholic Memorial and the New England Donor Services Organization partnered to celebrate Jack Aalto and organ and tissue donation, with a ceremonial **'puck-drop' and game recognition.**

Jack Aalto is an amazing young man, always upbeat, inspiring to others and a leader at Catholic Memorial and the greater community. Congratulations to Jack Aalto for being selected as the Massachusetts recipient of the NFHS Spirit of Sport Award.



## NFHS Heart of the Arts Award Massachusetts Recipient



### Julianne O'Connor

Xaverian Brothers High School

*For exemplifying the ideals of the positive heart of the arts that represent the core mission of education-based activities*

Julianne O'Connor has worked at Xaverian Brothers High School in the fine and performing arts since 2018. In this role, she has taught a variety of courses including public speaking, theater, directing, film studies, screenwriting, and pop dance, to boys in grades 7-12. Julianne also serves as **the school's theater director, staging two full-scale productions each academic year that draw as many as 70+ student performers, crew members, set designers, musicians, and costume designers from Xaverian as well as area girls schools, public schools, and private co-ed schools.**

Julianne goes the extra mile for her students, putting their experience and learning before all else. She works tirelessly to present material in a manner that allows each student the opportunity to find themselves in their role, whether as a writer, director, actor, set designer, crew member, or musician. She gives her all to her students to ensure that each one is known, cared for, and feels valued. Her driving motivation is creating inclusive and safe spaces for students, reminding them that there is a place for everyone and that every person and their unique talents deserve to be celebrated. Her classes and productions are inventive and engaging, pushing herself and her students to think outside of the box. One such example is the Spring 2024 production of the musical, Pippin.

Pippin is the story of a young prince in the Middle Ages who searches for his place in the world and his reason for being. Julianne wanted to bring the story into a setting that would immediately resonate with adolescents in the present day. She took the play from the middle ages to a modern junkyard, complete with punk costumes and gritty surroundings. Students contributed to the construction of a set, costumes, hair, and makeup that invoked an edgy vibe. In addition, students envisioned and executed production elements not before seen in a rendition of Pippin, including

original student artwork that contributed to the plot progression.

Julianne also incorporated student musicians as street performers into the production. Traditionally in Pippin, the actors are not responsible for providing music on stage during the show; it all comes from the orchestra pit. In this rendition of the production, on-stage student performers brought the music right into the scene, supported by student and professional musicians in the pit. These aspects provided a unique pathway for showcasing the visual arts, music, and theater in one production. From lighting design to set construction, costuming, hair and makeup, music, acting, choreography, dance, and the creation of original artwork, Julianne provided opportunities for artistic expression and creative development for students across all areas of the fine and performing arts, giving each student the opportunity to find his or her unique place in the production process.

The production of Pippin is just one example of how Julianne approaches everything she does with tremendous heart. She goes above and beyond as both a teacher and director, spending significant time ensuring that her classes and productions are thought-provoking, fresh, and resonate with the students under her direction. She has turned the **school's theater into something that students want to be a part of and audiences want to attend. The school's 400-seat theater is routinely sold out for performances, and standing ovations are the norm.** Her inclusive approach to both teaching and directing has resulted in hundreds of students finding a home and inspiration in the theater, something they might not have considered if they had not taken one of her classes, gained the courage to audition, signed up for the crew, or attended a show to support their friends and classmates.



# MIAA Coach of the Year Award

*Recognizing excellence in character, service, leadership and coaching*



## Baseball

**Dwayne Follette, Plymouth North High School**

- 2024-2025 Record: 22-3
- Career Record: 468-202
- Baseball Coach for 39 years
- MIAA State Champions 3 times
- 2008 Championship Team went undefeated 26-0
- Boston Globe Coach of the Year 2008 and 2024
- Massachusetts Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame 2016
- Plymouth Public Schools Athletic Hall of Fame
- NHSBCA National District Coach of the Year 2024

*Philosophy: Dwayne is a master of teaching baseball fundamentals. He is even better at teaching young men how to be great teammates and helps develop them into responsible, mature young men.*



## Basketball - Boys

**Robert Slater, Somerset Berkley Regional High School**

- 2024-2025 Record: 24-1
- Career Record: 177-154
- MIAA Division 2 State Champions 2025
- Boston Globe Division 2 Coach of the Year 2024 and 2025
- Somerset Lions Club Humanitarian of the Year 2014
- MBCA member

*Philosophy: Bob truly believes in educational athletics. He sees his job as one where he has the opportunity to teach his players life skills through teaching them the game of basketball. He does things the right way, both on and off the court, from being an inspirational leader and an exceptional teacher of the game of basketball, volunteering at the food pantry, coordinating our recreation nights, and winning a State Championship-Bob has been truly outstanding. He has never sought the limelight. He's a great coach and an even better human being.*



## **Basketball - Girls**

### **Mark Nickerson, Medfield High School**

- 2024-25 Record: 23-2
- Career Record: 450-120
- MIAA State Champions 2013, 2017, 2024, 2025
- Tri-Valley League Champions 2004, 2009-2017, 2023-2025
- Boston Globe Coach of the Year 2024
- Tri-Valley League Coach of the Year 2021, 2023, 2024, 2025

*Philosophy: Coach Nickerson believes that every player, regardless of their role on the team, is essential to the overall success of the team. His approach isn't just about being successful in wins but about creating a culture of respect, accountability, and selflessness. His teams not only excel on the court but also become a family because of his leadership. He has built a dominant program and has sent many girls to all different divisions of college basketball.*



## **Field Hockey**

### **Heather Korzec, Palmer High School**

- 2024-25 Record: 2-13-3
- Career Record: 72-183-45
- Field Hockey Coach for 20 years
- Softball Head Coach
- Student Athletic Academic Advisor

*Philosophy: I coach to help athletes grow both on and off the field, in a supportive environment where they can build strong relationships and discover their passion. I focus on dedication, resilience, and bringing energy and focus to every practice and game, while emphasizing the importance of putting the team first and contributing to something greater than themselves. Through teamwork, positivity, and a commitment to doing their best, I aim to develop confident, capable, and resilient student-athletes who carry the lessons of sport throughout their high school experience and beyond.*





## Football

### Michael Redding, Mansfield High School

- 2024-25 Record: 9-3
- Career Record: 300-101-4
- MIAA State Champions 1992, 1994, 1996, 2003, 2004, 2010, 2013, 2019
- Hockomock League Champions 19 times
- Boston Globe/Boston Herald Coach of the Year 1989, 2013
- Hockomock League Coach of the Year 2003, 2004, 2010, 2013, 2018
- New England Patriots Coach of the Week 2010, 2012, 2019, 2024
- New England Patriots Coach of the Year 2003
- Mansfield Track and Field Coach 1988-1998
- Mansfield Girls Varsity Basketball Coach 1998-2020
- Mansfield Athletic Director 2019-2021, Assistant Athletic Director 2021-present
- MHSFCA Member 32+ Years, MHSFCA Past President
- National Football Foundation EMass Chapter Past President

*Philosophy: Mike provides student athletes an enjoyable, rewarding experience in athletics that also allows them to develop skills and values that will afford them the opportunity to be successful, contributing members of the 21st century society. We consider ourselves a "college prep" program on and off the field and we will do everything we can to prepare your son to be accepted to a competitive college or university of his choice and, if interested, to continue his playing career on the college level.*



## Golf - Fall

### Nick Guerin, Wachusett Regional High School

- 2024-25 Record: 9-9
- Career Record: 164-70
- MIAA Division 1 Girls Golf State Champions 2024
- MIAA N/C/W Division 1 Girls Sectional Runner-Up 2024, 2025
- Mid Wach A League Champs (Boys) 2020, 2021, (Girls) 2025,
- Western MA D1 Boys Sectional Runner Up 2021, 2023
- WRHS Science Fair/Seminar Advisor 2004-2024
- WRHS Game Security, Ticket Sales, Football Chair Crew 2010-present

*Philosophy: Coach Guerin believes in developing student-athletes who excel both in the classroom and on the course. Academics always come first and athletics are a privilege, not a priority. He fosters a positive team culture where players approach each day with enthusiasm, confidence, and perspective, embracing the mindset that "every day is a Friday." Coach Guerin emphasizes the importance of respect, humility, and kindness. He believes that players perform their best when they support one another and maintain a spirit of sportsmanship, not just within the team, but towards competitors, as well. He encourages his players to recognize and appreciate great golf, no matter who plays it. He ultimately wants all players on the course to play well. Coach Guerin knows that true respect for the game includes celebrating excellence wherever it is found. To Coach Guerin, rooting for everyone is not just about competition, it's about character. Sportsmanship is not only expected, it's essential to everything he teaches and values as a coach.*



## **Gymnastics**

### **Zachary Stein, Reading Memorial High School**

- 2024-25 Record: 9-0
- Career Record: 78-21
- Middlesex League Team Champions 2017-2020, 2022-2025
- MIAA North Sectional Team Champions 2018
- MIAA North Sectional Team Qualifier 2016-2020, 2022-2025
- MIAA State Qualifier 2018-2020, 2022, 2025
- MAHSGC Coach of the Year 2025
- School and Middlesex League Team Record Score: 147.0 (2018)
- Coached 14 Middlesex League All-Stars, 5 Boston Globe/Boston Herald All-Scholastics: 22 State Individual Qualifiers, 8 New England Qualifiers, 5 National Team Members
- USAG Nationally-Ranked Judging Official
- National Association of Women's Gymnastics Judges Member

*Philosophy: My philosophy of athletics centers around encouraging athletes to continuously improve their skills while building confidence in their abilities. I believe in developing a healthy relationship with both success and failure, seeing each as an opportunity for growth. Teamwork and personal development are essential, as athletes learn to make decisions that prioritize the well-being and success of the team. Ultimately, the pursuit of excellence is not just about winning, but about striving to be the best version of oneself, both on and off the field.*



## **Ice Hockey - Boys**

### **Mark Leonard, Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical High School**

- 2024-25 Record: 15-3-1
- Career Record: 304-257-54
- 8 League Championships: Greater Boston League 2000-2003; Northeast Conference 2010, Commonwealth Athletic Conference 2021, 2022, 2023
- Vocational State Championships 2022, 2023
- 7 Coach of the Year Award: Greater Boston League 2000, 2003, 2006/Northeast Conference 2010, 2012, Commonwealth Athletic Conference 2021, 2023
- MSHCA Hall of Fame 2020
- MSHCA Executive Board Member
- Team Community Service includes Toys for Tots and letters to troops overseas

*Philosophy: Build a winning culture in which players hold each other accountable, don't care about individual credit and put team goals in front of their own. Create an atmosphere where kids love coming to the rink, hard work is the norm and they take pride in their team and school.*



## **Ice Hockey - Girls**

### **Courtney Turner, Hingham High School**

- 2024-25 Record: 22-1-1
- Career Record: 53-12-4
- MIAA Division 1 State Champions 2025
- School Leadership Council and Captains Class Instructor
- Assistant Girls' Lacrosse Coach
- Unified Sports Programs
- MIAA Ice Hockey Committee Coach Representative
- MSHCA Member

*Philosophy: Coach Turner has a comprehensive understanding of both high school hockey and the college landscape. In this current environment where the pressure on kids to leave for prep schools is ever increasing - Coach Turner is able to give sound advice and confidence to students and their families as they work through these decisions. Her coaching style is firm and focused but always remembering that as high school kids, fun needs to be part of the equation.*



## **Lacrosse - Boys**

### **Steve Rotondi, Cohasset High School**

- 2024-25 Record: 21-3
- Career Record: 124-48
- MIAA Division 4 State Champions 2023
- MIAA Division 4 State Runner Up 2025
- MIAA Division 4 Final 4 2022, 2023, 2025
- Boston Globe Coach of the Year 2023
- Boston Lax Coach of the Year 2014
- Catholic Central League Coach of the Year - 2014, 2015
- All-American Game Coach Selection - 2017, 2019
- Eastern Mass Lacrosse Coaches Association Member
- National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association Member
- Intercollegiate Men's Lacrosse Coaches Association Member

*Philosophy: Steve's coaching philosophy is to teach kids valuable life skills and lessons through hard work and dedication. Establishing a culture that regardless of position, skill, or role, they go on to apply those skills in their everyday lives. He wants his athletes to have pride in where they played and the lessons they learned, knowing they put a team above themselves. He wants our athletes to look back and appreciate their hard work, the hard work of their teammates.*



## Outdoor Track and Field - Boys

### John Pantuosco, Longmeadow High School

- 2024-25 Record: 5-0
- Outdoor Track and Field Coach for 25 Years
- MIAA Division 3 State Runner Up 2025
- Western Mass Champions - 4 consecutive years
- Boys Soccer and Indoor Track and Field Coach
- Class Advisor
- MSTCA Member

*Philosophy: Team philosophy is we try different events because we are never certain of what we might excel in. It is courageous to leave your comfort zone. We respect everyone of our teammates and encourage them all continuously. We appreciate our opponents because they push us to work harder. And we trust and listen to our coaches because they want what is best for each athlete and the team as a whole. Track is the ultimate team sport with many individual events. **To steal a quote from an old friend Coach John Devine, "It is not about track, it is about life."***



## Outdoor Track and Field - Girls

### Brian Gill, Mount Greylock Regional School

- 2024-25 Record: 7-0
- Career Record: 185-11
- MIAA Division 6 State Champions 2024, 2025
- 21 Berkshire County Titles
- 19 Unbeaten Seasons in Berkshire County
- 14 MIAA Western Mass Champions: 1998, 1999, 2000, 2004, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2018, 2021, 2023, 2024, 2025
- Frank Zoltek Coach of the Year Award 2018
- Berkshire Eagle All-Stars Gala Coach of the Year Award 2019
- MSTCA Coach of the Year Award 2021, 2024
- Barbarotta/Bianchi Coach of the Year Award 2025

*Philosophy: We desire the Mt. Greylock Track & Field Team to be known for their "excellence as an attitude" that is developed through disciplined training, spirited team atmosphere, and love of the process of improvement. We want to be better every day than we were the day before. Winning track meets is not the major goal of our program. We recognize that winning is never the best goal for any athlete. Winning is a result that is often beyond our control as we do not determine how good our competition will be. We do, however, determine how good we are. The major goal of our program therefore is individual improvement. We want our athletes to do their best and specifically to be able to be their best when it matters the most...in championship moments and at championship meets. So the Mt. Greylock Track and Field tradition of excellence as an attitude shapes how you train, your spirit of fun and encouragement, and your will to compete to the best of your ability.*





## **Soccer - Boys**

### **Stephen Sheridan, Mansfield High School**

- 2024-25 Record: 16-4-2
- Career Record: 162-130-78
- 37 Year Coaching Career
- Hockomock League Champions 2015, 2018
- Hockomock Sports Coach of the Year 2015

*Philosophy: My philosophy as a soccer coach is rooted in the belief that athletics serve a purpose far greater than wins and losses. While skill development and competitive success are important, the true value of soccer lies in the lessons it teaches about character, teamwork, and leadership. I am committed to fostering an environment where student-athletes learn to compete with passion, integrity, and respect for themselves, their teammates, their opponents, and the game. Sportsmanship will always be a fundamental expectation. I encourage our players to demonstrate humility in victory and resilience in defeat, understanding that how we conduct ourselves reflects our program, our school, and our community. Our behavior on and off the field should always reflect honor and class. Community involvement is also central to our program. Ultimately, my goal is to prepare student-athletes to become not only great soccer players, but great people. Through accountability, hard work, communication, and shared responsibility, our players learn to lead with confidence and empathize with others. I strive to empower each athlete to leave the program more self-disciplined, more thoughtful, and better equipped to succeed in life beyond the field.*



## **Soccer - Girls**

### **David Wainwright, Wellesley High School**

- 2024-25 Record: 19-3-1
- Career Record: 230-58-62
- MIAA Division 1 State Champions 2021, 2023, 2024
- MIAA Division 3 State Champions 2011
- Boston Globe Coach of the Year 2011, 2018, 2024
- EMGSCA Coach of the Year 2011, 2023
- Metro-West Coach of the Year 2011, 2021
- Tri-Valley League Coach of the Year 2009, 2012

*Philosophy: Coach Dave believes that sports are the ultimate classroom where character is revealed, leadership is forged, and life's most important lessons are learned. His athletes don't expect anything to be handed to them; they earn every inch through effort, resilience, and ownership. He sees the sport itself as the greatest teacher, encouraging creativity, risk-taking, and full-hearted commitment. He fosters a team-first culture built on trust and collaboration, where players are not silent followers but bold thinkers, conversational leaders, and courageous decision-makers. His coaching is grounded in the belief that nothing is guaranteed in life except the ability to adapt your response and give your all. He doesn't coddle; he empowers. His athletes build confidence not from constant praise, but from deep self-awareness, hard truths, and the grit developed through solving problems themselves. He pushes players to be mentally sharp and tactically intelligent. Coach Dave's teams are known not just for their success, but for their maturity, intelligence, and determination. His student-athletes compete with a deep understanding of the game, their teammates, and themselves.*



## Swimming and Diving - Boys

### Jim McLaughlin, Weston High School

- 2024-25 Record: 9-2
- Career Record: 193-29-1
- MIAA Division 2 State Champions 2022, 2023, 2024
- MIAA North Sectional Champions 2024
- Dual County League Champions - 3 times
- EMISCA Boys Assistant Coach of the Year - 2 times
- EMISCA Boys Head Coach of the Year - 2 times
- Boston Globe Boys Coach of the Year - 2 times
- Math Teacher and Department Head

*Philosophy: Jim's teams have achieved a consistent, high level of success with an incredible win-loss record and repeated post season success. Those achievements are the outward expression of a team that is healthy on the inside. Jim worries about every kid on the team, insures they have a role and know they are important, and treats all with respect. He's that coach who believes if you take care of the little things day to day, over the long haul the big things will take care of themselves. It's that simple.*



## Swimming and Diving - Girls

### Gretchen Turner, Acton-Boxborough Regional High School

- 2024-25 Record: 8-0-0
- Career Record: 96-36-2
- 10 Year Coaching Career
- MIAA Division 1 Girls Swimming & Diving State Champions 2021, 2022, 2024

*Philosophy: Gretchen embodies what it means to be a champion and leader of student-athletes in an era dominated by constant distraction, divided interests, and conflicting goals. She fosters an environment of educational athletic competition that is underpinned not only by instilling a drive to succeed, but by promoting inclusion, selflessness, and a culture of mutual determination that sees the individual success translate into team victories, and as a result, a team culture that celebrates the individual contributions the same as the overall team achievement. Gretchen is the truest exemplar of what it means to lead by example through her efforts outside of the pool, both in the local and wider communities through advancing the sport of girls swim and dive. She has a way of building deep connections with her student-athletes, pushing them to not only reach their competitive ceilings, but crash through them. In doing so, she creates meaningful, lasting impressions and experiences for student-athletes, consistently resulting in champions in the pool, as well as the classroom.*



## **Unified Basketball**

### **Ben Maki, Natick High School**

- Unified Basketball Coach for 7 years
- Special Olympics Unified Champion School
- Started the Red Hawk Round Up Tournament hosted at Natick High School
- Master of Ceremonies for the Unified Track and Field State Championship Meet

*Philosophy: The Natick Unified Basketball program is built on a foundation of community, inclusion, competition, and friendship. We believe that every student regardless of ability deserves the opportunity to experience the pride, challenge, and joy that come from being part of a team. We strive to ensure that every member of the program feels valued, supported, and empowered. If you're part of the Natick Unified program then you are part of a team where everyone contributes, everyone matters, and everyone has a role in shaping our success. Unified basketball at Natick High School is more than a sport, it is a community built on respect, enthusiasm, and the belief that when we play together, we all rise together. Since the time this program started 9 years ago; Natick High School as a whole has been changed for the better. The gym has more of a buzz in the fall, the hallways have more hugs and high fives between our athletes and our general education peers, and everyone in the building is happy to celebrate the success and pride of others, while truly understanding that being a part of that feeling for someone else is also a gift to yourself.*



## **Unified Track and Field**

### **Chip Collins, Hopkinton High School**

- Unified Track and Field Head Coach and Founder 2018-present
- MIAA Unified Track and Field Division 2 State Champions 2022, 2023
- MIAA Unified Track and Field Team Sportsmanship Award 2017
- Unified Basketball Co-Head Coach 2021-Present.
- Unified National Banner School/Champion School 2021, 2025
- Special Education Teacher at Hopkinton High School since 2004
- Founder and Head Advisor of Hopkinton Best Buddies since 2004

*Philosophy: Chip is quite simply the very definition of what is right about Unified Athletics. Chip has dedicated his professional career to uniting students with and without disabilities, and helping our disabled students to feel included, valued, and respected in all walks of life. Chip is a tireless advocate for his students and athletes, supporting them on a daily basis in his resource room, Best Buddies events, and Unified Track & Field and Basketball games and practices.*



## **Wrestling**

### **Carmine Colace, Franklin High School**

- 2024-25 Record: 12-11-1
- Franklin High School Wrestling Coach for 43 years
- Over 800 Career Coaching Wins
- 9 MIAA Team State Championships
- 20 MIAA Team Sectional Championships
- 20 Hockomock League Team Championships
- Individuals Coached: 120 MIAA Sectional Champions, 38 MIAA State Champions, 9 New England Champions, 22 All-Americans, 3 National Champions
- 3 Time Boston Globe Coach of the Year
- National Wrestling Coaches Association: Region 1 National Coach of the Year 1999
- National Wrestling Coaches Association Member

*Philosophy: Its simple, work hard and make it fun. When I first started coaching, I told kids as long as they gave it their best, I would never be upset with them.*



***Thank you to O'Connor Studios for providing photography at today's event.***





# NFHS Sectional Coach of the Year Award

*In grateful appreciation of outstanding service and unselfish devotion to interscholastic athletics*



## Basketball - Boys

CJ Neely, Franklin High School

- 2023-24 Record: 25-2
- Career Record: 187-47
- MIAA Division 1 State Finalists 2017, 2018, 2024
- MIAA Division 1 Central Sectional Champions 2017, 2018
- Boston Globe Division 1 Coach of the Year 2017, 2024
- Massachusetts Basketball Coaches Association Coach of the Year 2017, 2023
- Former High School Cross Country, Tennis and Track and Field Coach

*Philosophy: The high school basketball coach must take on many roles and has many responsibilities. My motto as a coach is to “teach the person before the player”. A head coach is in a very important position as an educator of character and life skills. The true success of a coach is not in the wins and losses but in what kind of people graduate from your program and who they are 5-10 years after they have left you. Coaches should stress values before winning and never compromise themselves just to get a few more “w’s”. Winning is an unbelievable thing, but it is a byproduct of improving your players as people and providing them with the skills to be successful in life. There are three key elements that direct my coaching:*

1. Positive Relationship Building
2. Character Development through team’s Core Values
3. Student Athlete Development on and off the court and in the classroom



## Volleyball - Fall

Patricia Cawley, Canton High School

- 2023-24 Record: 24-1
- Career Record: 303-80
- MIAA Division 2 State Champions 2019
- MIAA Division 2 State Finalists 2023
- 18 Hockomock League Championships
- Massachusetts Volleyball Coaches Association Hall of Fame 2017
- Two-time Boston Globe Division 2 Volleyball Coach of the Year
- New Agenda Northeast Hall of Fame 2019
- HockomockSports.com Coach of the Year 2016, 2019, 2023
- Volleyball Official for 30 Years

*Philosophy: High school athletics should provide an opportunity for the student athlete to grow and learn in a supportive, comfortable environment. Through athletics, players gain confidence, learn life-long lessons, make life-long friends, and become life-long leaders. Through athletics, players learn to win and lose graciously. They learn that hard work is necessary to reach the stars. Most of all, players have fun!*



# NFHS National Coach of the Year Award and NFHS Sectional Coach of the Year Award

*In grateful appreciation of outstanding service and unselfish devotion to interscholastic athletics*



## **Field Hockey**

**Eileen Donahue, Watertown High School**

- 2023-24 Record: 22-0
- Career Record: 771-34-46
- NFHS Records 184 Game Undeclared Streak and 124 Consecutive Wins
- MIAA State Championships - 21 times
- MIAA Division 2 North Champions - 26 times
- Middlesex League Champions - 34 times
- Massachusetts Women in Athletics Distinguished Service Award 2020
- Pathfinder Award for commitment to girls and women in sports 2012
- Coach of the Year Honors: NFHCA 2000, 2013, Top of the Circle United States 2014
- Hall of Fame Honors: new Agenda Northeast 1995, Watertown High School 1997, Belmont High School 2001, National Field Hockey Coaches Association 2020
- K-5 Physical Education Teacher

***Philosophy:** I believe it's not how you start, it's how you finish. Whatever athletic level each player is at, I do my best to teach them that they can always do better. I build on each player contributing at a high level on the team. All my teams create their own identity. We don't get caught up into individual stats. It's the team accomplishments that are important. Every practice my players consistently compete with each other. I encourage them to embrace the uncomfortable. Over time, when a player accepts the process, and buys into the training, that's where I see their development and confidence shine. This all helps with the success of our team.*



## MIAA John E. Young Distinguished Service Award

*Established in 1990, this award has been reserved for Athletic Directors of recognized accomplishment who also reflect the extraordinarily high personal values and professional standards possessed by Athletic Director John E. Young until his untimely death while serving as MIAA Vice President.*



**Melanie Martin**

Melanie Martin has been the Director of Athletics at Holyoke High School for the past 12 years. Prior to this role, Mel was a physical education/health teacher and athletic trainer for 20 years at Holyoke High School. Throughout her time as an athletic administrator, Mel has made significant contributions at the local and state levels. Within the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference (PVIAC), Mel has served as chair of the District 1 Sportsmanship Committee and been a member of the Western Mass Tournament Committee, PVIAC Executive Board, and chair school for Ski. At the state level, Mel has been a long serving member of the MIAA Unified Sports Advisory Committee, served as secretary and vice chair of the MIAA Ski Committee, and has been a district representative on the MIAA Sports Medicine Committee. During her tenure, Holyoke High School has hosted many MIAA tournament events including baseball, football, soccer, softball, track and field and Unified Track and Field. Whether serving as a host site manager or athletic trainer for these events, Mel has provided outstanding leadership and been quick to be of service for anything that will assist in providing a positive interscholastic athletic experience for students.

Mel has been a strong advocate for inclusion at Holyoke High School and worked tirelessly to provide students with a fulfilling and meaningful high school experience. Under her leadership, Holyoke High School started Unified Basketball and Unified Track and Field programs, bringing together students with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team to train and compete as equals. Holyoke High School was one of the original schools in the PVIAC to offer Unified Sports programs and was quickly recognized as a Unified Champion School in 2017. Unified Sports programs have grown tremendously in the Pioneer Valley due to the leadership of Mel in sharing the impact that the program has upon the Holyoke High School community and mentoring fellow athletic administrators to support Unified Sports in their schools.

Through the leadership and support of Mel Martin, Holyoke High School has annually hosted the MIAA/Special Olympics Massachusetts Unified Track and Field West Sectional Meet. This event has become a highlight of the Unified Track and Field season for schools from the Pioneer Valley and Berkshire County, providing an opportunity to qualify for the Unified Track and Field State Championship Meet. Mel has also been quick to volunteer to host an end-of-season Unified Basketball Jamboree for schools from the region.

Congratulations to Melanie Martin for being selected as the recipient of the 2025 MIAA John E. Young Distinguished Service Award.



## MIAA Distinguished Service Award

*For unique and invaluable service to the thousands of students attending  
MIAA member schools across the Commonwealth*



**Keith Crowley**

Keith Crowley, Ph.D. has over three decades of experience as a secondary school administrator and teacher in Catholic education. **Keith currently serves as the Principal/Associate Head of School at Saint John's Preparatory School. He joined the senior administrative team at St. John's in July 2011, overseeing all aspects of academic life at the school including curriculum, faculty development, spiritual life, student discipline, extracurricular programs and athletics.**

Keith began his educational career as a science teacher and strength and conditioning coordinator at Cathedral High School in Springfield, MA. In 1997, Keith was hired as a science teacher and track and field coach at Xaverian Brothers High School. He was named chair of the science department in 1999, and became assistant principal for the freshman class two years later. Keith then served as assistant principal for academics at Xaverian from 2003-**2011, before joining the staff at St. John's.**

At the state level, Dr. Crowley has a long legacy of leadership and service on several MIAA committees. He served on the Tournament Management Committee for a decade from 2002-03 through 2011-12. He has also served on the MIAA Wrestling Committee since 2011 and the MIAA Rugby Committee since 2016. In addition to this service, Dr. Crowley has been a member of the MIAA Board of Directors since 2007, serving as President of the Association from 2013-2015. Keith is well-respected by colleagues throughout the state for his calm demeanor and thoughtful leadership, focusing on decision making that will positively impact the interscholastic athletic experience of students statewide.

Dr. Crowley holds a BS and MS in physical therapy from Springfield College and a Ph.D. in educational administration from Boston College. In addition to his current role as Principal and Associate Head of School, Dr. Crowley is a practicing physical therapist and **currently teaches a course in anatomy and physiology to juniors and seniors at St. John's.**

Congratulations to Keith Crowley for being selected as a recipient of the 2025 MIAA Distinguished Service Award.





## MIAA Distinguished Service Award

*For unique and invaluable service to the thousands of students attending  
MIAA member schools across the Commonwealth*



**Patricia Rowe**

Patti Rowe has been officiating field hockey and girls lacrosse for over 40 years. Throughout her distinguished career as an official, Patti has prioritized service to others and the growth of the sports for future generations.

**Patti is a member of the Boston Field Hockey Umpires Association. She has been on the organization's executive board since 1987 and has served as president since 2020.** Through the years, Patti has been the field hockey commissioner for several MIAA member school leagues including the Middlesex League, Greater Boston League, and Merrimack Valley Conference. In this role, Patti coordinates rules interpretations meetings for officials and coaches, and serves as a mentor for fellow officials.

Patti has been an officials representative on the MIAA Field Hockey Committee since 2001 and has also served as committee secretary. Her expertise with field hockey rules at the state and national levels has provided an invaluable resource for MIAA member schools. Patti has officiated several MIAA state semi-final and final round field hockey games.

In recognition of her contributions to field hockey and girls lacrosse, Patti was inducted into the New Agenda Northeast Hall of Fame in 2005. **Patti says, "Interscholastic athletics provides the opportunity for students to compete in sports. As an official it gives me the opportunity to educate, be a role model, be an advocate for women's sport, continue to improve my skills, and learn from each game."**

Congratulations to Patti Rowe for being selected as a recipient of the 2025 MIAA Distinguished Service Award.



## MIAA Distinguished Service Award

*For unique and invaluable service to the thousands of students attending  
MIAA member schools across the Commonwealth*



**Matthew Trahan**

Matt Trahan has been an instrumental member of the interscholastic athletic community in the Mayflower Athletic Conference, Massachusetts Vocational Athletic Directors Association, Massachusetts Secondary Schools Athletic Directors Association, and the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association.

Matt served as the President of the Mayflower Athletic Conference for 11 years, and is currently serving in his seventh year as the Vice President. In addition to his service at the league and local level, Matt is seen as a leader at the state level. He has represented District 8 as a member of the MIAA Board of Directors for the past seven years. Matt also recently concluded 18 years of service on the MIAA Basketball Committee as a representative of District D and District 8, including a multi-year tenure as Vice Chair of the committee. Through each of these roles, Matt Trahan has been known as a person of the highest character and integrity. He cares deeply about the interscholastic athletic experience of student-athletes and making decisions that are focused on what is best for all students.

**Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School Coach Brandon Mendez said, “I have never been short of amazed by the way Mr. Trahan exemplifies the core values of the school and the MIAA. Not only does Mr. Trahan carry himself as ethical, fair and consistently holding the values of sportsmanship, but he commits all the coaches and athletes around him to the same level of expectations. There is no question in my mind that he is the driving force behind the strong tradition and reputation that is sportsmanship at Old Colony.”**

During a 25+-year basketball coaching career, Matt mentored hundreds of students, always focusing on character and **success off the court, in the classroom and the community. As a varsity coach for 12 years, Matt’s teams compiled over 190 wins, 5 Mayflower Athletic Conference Championships, 5 State Vocational Championships, and qualified for the MIAA Tournament 11 times.** He was recognized with the MIAA Sherman Kinney Basketball Award for outstanding contributions to high school basketball in 2024.

As an athletic director for over 20 years, Matt is known as a leader among his colleagues and has served on the Executive Board of MSSADA for many years. He is a past president of MSSADA and currently serves as the Conference Coordinator and Web Administrator for the association.

Congratulations to Matt Trahan for being selected as a recipient of the 2025 MIAA Distinguished Service Award.



# NFHS State Award for Outstanding Service Massachusetts Recipient

*In recognition of service and contributions in support of the MIAA and high school athletics*



## Franklin TV

FCCA, Franklin Community Cable Access, Inc. (d/b/a Franklin TV) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-governmental organization. Franklin TV creates and publishes informative, inclusive programs and content by and for all Franklin residents, businesses and town government via three local Cable TV channels for Public Access Programs, for School Events and for Government Meetings. Franklin TV also streams live events via Youtube and operates a local radio station, Franklin Public Radio, 102.9fm.

The mission of Franklin TV is:

- To inform, educate and entertain while promoting the community good.
- To be the citizen media center of Franklin.
- To serve all who serve the public interest.

Franklin TV pledges to:

- Make great local programming happen.
- Make it easily, enjoyably accessible.
- Make it interesting, informative, entertaining.
- Make it matter. Because Franklin Matters.

Over the past few years, Franklin TV has been an outstanding partner with MIAA initiatives to promote the value of education-based athletics. Through state-of-the-art facilities, Franklin TV has produced a television program entitled **“Winning Ways With The MIAA.”** This program has showcased MIAA Student Athletes of the Month, facilitated in-depth conversations about the shortage of game officials and promoted educational initiatives to eradicate hate and bias in high school athletics through interviews and discussions.

Most recently, Franklin TV has highlighted the excitement of MIAA postseason tournaments by developing live programming with bracket releases and analysis, as well as interviews with participating tournament teams. “The Road to the Tsongas Center” and “The Road to the TD Garden” aired to coincide with the release of the MIAA basketball and ice hockey tournaments respectively last winter and similar bracket release programs have followed.

The MIAA is grateful for the partnership with Franklin TV to assist in the mission of “growing courageous leaders” and highlighting the outstanding accomplishments of student leaders across the state.

## WELLNESS

**to empower** students to make healthy life choices

## SPORTSMANSHIP

**to teach** respect for self, team, opponents, officials, rules, and the game itself

## COACHES' EDUCATION

**to provide** resources for teacher-coaches who serve as curriculum instructors of educational athletics

## LEADERSHIP

**to promote** the power of positive influence that student athletes and teacher-coaches share as role models

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

**to recognize** the privilege of athletic participation and the responsibility of giving back to the community



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