

# 2024-2025 NCHSAA State Award Winners



CHAPEL HILL – The North Carolina High School Athletic Association annually presents statewide awards in several different categories, all based on those "who have done the most for high school athletics," rather than a single accomplishment or having an outstanding win-loss record.

The awards are named in memory or in honor of outstanding individuals in each category, several of whom are current members of the NCHSAA Hall of Fame.

## ***Tim Stevens Media Representative Of The Year***

**Cory Smith, Mount Airy News**

Cory attended UNC-Chapel Hill and graduated with a bachelor's in media and journalism (broadcast & electronic communication concentration), a bachelor's in communication studies (performance studies concentration), and a minor in history.

Cory joined the Mount Airy News in 2017 as a sports reporter before being promoted to sports editor three years later. He has covered 16 state championship teams, 10 state runner-up teams, and 64 individual state champions across Surry County. Cory has also covered numerous college games, including the NCAA women's soccer national championship, NCAA baseball regionals and super regionals, and multiple ACC football games.

Cory has won nine NC Press Association awards during his tenure as sports editor. He also finished second in sports writing and third in multimedia in recent company-wide competitions held by Adams Publishing Group – which featured entries from more than 125 publications across 18 states.

## ***Harvey Reid Male Coach Of The Year***

**Chris Goodman – Terry Sanford Tennis**

Harvey Reid was a basketball coach who made major contributions to the tradition of high school sports in the state of North Carolina. It is my pleasure to recognize a coach today who has had the same impact.

Chris Goodman, a native of Douglas, Ga., is a retired military veteran who has made the city of Fayetteville, NC his home. He is currently the men's and women's tennis coach and the women's basketball coach for Terry Sanford High. He is the Region 4 representative for the North Carolina High School Tennis Coaches Association and is an active member of the North Carolina Basketball Coaches Association.

Chris took over the men's tennis program in 2020 and the women's program in 2021. In his 5 years as the men's head coach, he has had a state qualifier each year, with the most recent Drew Hedgecoe become only the 2<sup>nd</sup> male in NCHSAA history to win 4 individual singles state titles. During his tenure, the men's program has boasted a 48-8 record. The team has won 5 consecutive conference titles and were the 3A dual team Eastern Regional Runners-Up in 2022.

Since taking over the women's tennis program, he has had a state representative each year with 3

players winning a state title. During his tenure, the women's program has a 58-5 overall record. The team has won four consecutive conference titles, were the 3A Dual Team Eastern Regional Runners-up in 2021, 3A dual team state Runners-up in 2023, and the 3A dual team state champions in 2024. During the 2024 season, the team swept the individual singles, doubles, and dual team titles.

In 2023, Chris took over as the head coach for the women's basketball program and has compiled a 53-10 overall record. The team completed back-to-back undefeated seasons in conference play and were regular-season and conference tournament champions. In 2024, the team finished as the 3A state runners-up. In 2025, the team finished the season as the 3A Eastern Regional Runners-up.

***Doris Howard Female Coach Of The Year***  
**Tiffany Lowrance, West Henderson High School**

Her journey began in her own community, as she is a proud 1997 graduate of West Henderson High School. Her passion for sports took her to Appalachian State University, where she thrived as a student-athlete, excelling in both volleyball and basketball. Her remarkable achievements, including being named a two-time all-conference player in volleyball, laid a strong foundation for her successful coaching career.

Upon completing her degree in management, Tiffany returned to her roots at West Henderson, where she was mentored by none other than her mother, the legendary Jan Stanley.

Over the past 20 years, Tiffany has become a cornerstone of West Henderson's athletic tradition. As the head volleyball coach, she has not only amassed over 300 career victories but has also guided her teams to multiple conference and regional championships, culminating in a prestigious state title in 2024.

Her commitment to excellence extends beyond volleyball, as she has also made significant contributions as a coach in softball and basketball, exemplifying her dedication to developing student-athletes across multiple sports.

One of the most heartwarming aspects of Tiffany's career is her partnership with her sister, Brooke.

Together, they share a unique bond, coaching side by side and celebrating each other's successes, which brings Tiffany immense joy and pride.

Outside the realm of sports, Tiffany is a devoted wife and mother. Married to her husband, Robbie for 17 wonderful years, together they are proud parents to two amazing children, Rylee and Cooper.

When she is not coaching, you can find Tiffany cherishing precious moments with her family and friends, embodying the true spirit of teamwork and community.

***Dave Harris Athletic Director Of The Year***  
**Dustin Kerley, Watauga High School**

He is a proud graduate of Alexander Central High School where he excelled as a three-sport athlete in football, basketball, and baseball.

He went on to earn his physical education degree from Mars Hill College, where he was a dedicated member of the baseball program. Furthering his education, he obtained his master's in school administration from Western Carolina University in 2016.

His coaching journey began at A.C. Reynolds High School, where he served as an assistant coach in football and baseball, contributing to a remarkable 4A state championship in 2009. Since 2010, he has been shaping young athletes at Watauga High School as an assistant coach in both football and baseball, currently serving as the defensive coordinator in football.

His leadership extends beyond coaching; from 2009 to 2016, he was a physical education teacher and coach at Watauga High School, and he later took on administrative roles, including assistant principal and athletic director.

In his current position as the athletic director for both Watauga Middle and High Schools, Dustin has made a significant impact, fostering relationships with coaches and peers, supporting their success, and creating an environment where student-athletes thrive.

His dedication has been recognized through numerous awards, including the NCADA Citation Award in 2021, NIAAA CAA certification in 2023, and the NCADA Athletic Director of Excellence Award in 2024.

***Bob Deaton Principal Of The Year***  
**Sonya Blankenship, Swain County High School**

Sonya Blankenship recently retired from Swain County High School, serving as its principal for six years. Prior to becoming Swain County High School's principal, Blankenship spent 21 years as a coach, coaching volleyball, softball, girls' soccer, and basketball.

Sonya graduated from Lenoir-Rhyne University with a BA in Health & Physical Education and her Masters' degree from Gardner-Webb University. She is National Board Certified in health education, earned a 1A state volleyball championship and was named Principal of the Year at least three years.

Under her leadership, Swain County High School has excelled in all sports it offers, with teams making deep runs in the playoffs. During the 2024-2025 school year, her teams have won state championships in cross country, indoor track & field, outdoor track & field, with other teams qualifying for the playoffs. She is genuinely passionate about working alongside others, rallying diverse individuals toward a common goal. That was very obvious as her student-athletes rallied to help others in western North Carolina, who were devastated by Hurricane Helene.

***Bob McRae Superintendent Of The Year***  
**Tanya Turner, Perquimans County Schools**

Tanya Turner is the superintendent of Perquimans County Schools where she graduated and began her teaching career in 1992. She assumed this position in May of 2019.

Prior to serving as superintendent, Turner was an assistant superintendent for four years in the Edenton-Chowan school system. She is entering her 31<sup>st</sup> year of education, during which time she has also served as a teacher, instructional facilitator, assistant principal, principal, and director. She received her undergraduate degree from Methodist University, her MSA from East Carolina University, her educational specialist degree from Wingate, and a doctorate in education from Wingate University.

Under Turner's support during 2024-2025 school year, Perquimans High School has excelled in all sports, qualifying for state playoffs in fall, winter and spring sports. The women's basketball team was a regional runner-up, while volleyball, softball and baseball were state championship runners-up. Additionally, she has overseen the upgrade of outdoor facilities of the high school, with a new high school currently being built.

### ***NFHS State Award for Outstanding Service*** **Burt Jenkins, NC DPI**

This award was created by the National Federation of High Schools to recognize organizations or individuals for services which generally represent a significant impact or contributions to high school athletics.

With over 29 years of experience in athletics across middle school, high school, and collegiate levels in North Carolina, Burt Jenkins is a respected leader in interscholastic sports policy and education. Burt spent many years as the athletics consultant at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), spending more than a decade shaping athletic policies in partnership with the NCHSAA, NCADA, NCCA, and other statewide organizations. For many years, Jenkins served a key role in clarifying and communicating athletic rules and legislation, serving as a vital liaison to school districts, coaches, and administrators.

Burt received a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education and a Master of Arts in Education, both from East Carolina University.

In addition to his policy work, Jenkins has a strong background in healthful living education, having led statewide initiatives and standards revisions, and contributing to the NC Shape Board and federal compliance reviews. Prior to his tenure at NCDPI, Jenkins was an award-winning teacher and coach, earning accolades such as NCAHPERD Middle School Health Teacher of the Year and National Board Certification. His early career includes coaching roles at East Carolina University and various public schools where he coached football, softball, men's and women's basketball and women's tennis.

Burt's service to young people across this state epitomizes commitment and reflects a lifelong dedication to student-athlete development and educational excellence.

## Scholar-Athlete Team Awards

The NCHSAA Scholar Athlete Program is the largest voluntary participation program in the Association annually and recognizes individual athletes with a GPS of 3.5 or higher in their semester of competition as well as teams that total an unweighted team GPA of 3.1 or higher for their semester of competition. The NCHSAA, thanks to a partnership with the Governor's Highway Safety Program, provides cash prizes to the teams in each sport that have the highest unweighted GPAs in the state and participate in the program.

### SPRING SPORTS 2024:

#### SCHOLAR ATHLETE AWARD

BASEBALL:	SOUTH POINT HS (3.748)
MEN'S GOLF:	SOUTH POINT HS (3.833)
MEN'S LACROSSE:	WEDDINGTON HS (3.645)
WOMEN'S LACROSSE:	TOPSAIL HS (3.70)
MEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK:	NCSSM - DURHAM (3.766)
WOMEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK:	SOUTH POINT HS (3.863)
WOMEN'S SOCCER	TIE: JACKSONVILLE & WEDDINGTON (3.830)
SOFTBALL:	NORTH WILKES HS (3.927)
MEN'S TENNIS:	SOUTH POINT HS (3.974)

### FALL SPORTS 2024:

CHEERLEADING:	CHERRYVILLE (3.898)
MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY:	HIBRITEN (3.91)
WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY:	<b>ENLOE (4.0)</b>
FOOTBALL:	WILKES CENTRAL (3.42)
WOMEN'S GOLF:	<b>SOUTHWESTERN RANDOLPH (4.0)</b>
MEN'S SOCCER:	HIGHLAND SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY (3.93)
WOMEN'S TENNIS:	HOGGARD (3.972)
VOLLEYBALL:	<b>EAST RUTHERFORD (4.0)</b>

### WINTER SPORTS 2024-2025

MEN'S BASKETBALL:	NCSSM - DURHAM (3.837)
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL:	NORTH BUNCOMBE (3.98)
MEN'S INDOOR TRACK:	CENTRAL ACADEMY OF TECHNOLOGY (3.83)
WOMEN'S INDOOR TRACK:	ASHEVILLE (3.9)
CHEERLEADING:	HIGHLAND TECH & EAST RUTHERFORD (3.84)
MEN'S SWIM AND DIVE:	<b>SW EDGECOMBE &amp; EASTERN ALAMANCE (4.0)</b>
WOMEN'S SWIM AND DIVE:	<b>EAST SURRY (4.0)</b>
MEN'S WRESTLING:	NCSSM - DURHAM (3.669)
WOMEN'S WRESTLING:	<b>ASHEVILLE (4.0)</b>

## **Tony Simeon Courage Awards**

The Tony Simeon Courage Awards are designed to honor individuals who, despite adversity, have demonstrated exemplary character and performance and, as a result, have been an inspiration to all those involved with the programs of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association. They are named in honor of NCHSAA Hall of Famer Tony Simeon, a long-time coach at High Point Central.

### **Chadlyn Traylor, North Mecklenburg**

Chadlyn was diagnosed with hydrocephalus as an infant, a disease where excess fluid builds up in the brain. He had eight surgeries before he was 14, including one that left a large keloid, a lumpy scar that formed after an incision was infected. Chadlyn has won three NCHSAA basketball championships, one with West Charlotte and two with North Mecklenburg. This year, he scored 22 points and had four rebounds and four assists in the championship game and was named the West MVP. He was named conference player of the year this year and will play at College of Charleston next year.

### **Laura Eakins, Pender High School**

Laura Eakins is a PE teacher and coach at Pender High School, and last summer, she donated her kidney to help one of her former students. Kaleek Beatty, who was born with a chronic kidney disease, needed a new kidney, and Eakins felt the call to help. Ultimately, she and Beatty were not a match, but through a voucher program at UCLA, her donation would go to a stranger, and Beatty would move up the transplant waiting list.

### **Trooper Wright, Morehead High School**

After the final practice of the season, Morehead junior football player Trooper Wright lost his left arm in an ATV accident. He's already back with the football team, preparing for the 2025 season. "The only limitations are the ones you put on yourself," Wright told WFMY News. Tooper and the Panthers have their eyes set on ending their playoff drought this fall.

### **Jacob Gainey, Southwestern Randolph**

Ranked 4th in his class with a 4.611 GPA, Jacob is student body president, a member of Beta Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and has lettered in both basketball and baseball. Despite battling multiple knee injuries, including dislocating his knee five different times during his athletic career, he remained a team leader and role model for his peers. Jacob has been deeply involved in service, volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, the Miracle League, and leading mission trips with his church. Jacob will attend NC State this fall and study sports management with a double minor in journalism and sports science.