



2024-2025 Heart of a Champion Award Winners

CHAPEL HILL, NC – The North Carolina High School Athletic Association is proud to announce the recipients of the 2024-2025 Heart of a Champion Award. This honor recognizes student-athletes across the state who have demonstrated exceptional sportsmanship, leadership, and community service while participating in high school athletics.

Each recipient represents the very best of North Carolina's high school sports culture and exemplifies the values of integrity, perseverance, and dedication on and off the field.

2024-2025 Heart of a Champion Award Winners:

Ralee Bare, North Wilkes High School

An accomplished athlete across volleyball, basketball, and softball, Ralee has served in numerous leadership positions and excelled despite injury setbacks, mentoring teammates and representing her school with distinction.

Emma Clark, Topsail High School

An NCHSAA Scholar-Athlete, Emma has shown outstanding leadership and resilience through injury. She is a dual-sport athlete in basketball and softball and is committed to continuing her athletic career at UNC Greensboro.

Peyton Collins, Seaforth High School

A basketball team captain and SALT co-president, Peyton is known for her selflessness, sportsmanship, and leadership both on the court and in her community.

Katherine Cushing, Cuthbertson High School

A standout in swimming and track, Katherine is a National Champion in tetrathlon, a black belt in Taekwondo, and a student pilot. She volunteers for Special Olympics and serves as a lifeguard and coach.

Rylee Greene, Greene Central High School

A women's tennis captain and academic standout, Rylee is Greene Central's valedictorian. She leads multiple school organizations and works as a certified pharmacy technician.

Annissa Goldston, Asheboro High School

A varsity cheerleader and soccer player, Annissa is a consistent honor roll student, recognized for her commitment to team spirit, school involvement, and mentoring others.

Miranda Hancock, Bartlett Yancey High School

A standout women's soccer player, Miranda has won multiple awards, including All-Conference and All-Region honors. She also holds the highest GPA on her soccer team. In addition to her athletic success, Miranda is a competitive dancer during her time off the field, balancing academics and extracurricular activities with excellence.

Bailey Huff, Ronald Reagan High School

Bailey holds multiple school records in softball and track. She is also a member of four academic honor societies and serves as a mentor to young athletes in the community and at Ronald Reagan High School!

Shaelyn Johnson, Weldon High School

Shaelyn is an outstanding athlete in volleyball, basketball, softball, and track. She has been named MVP in volleyball, basketball, and softball for all four years, earning All-Conference honors in each sport. Shaelyn boasts a 4.5 GPA in high school and a 4.0 GPA in college classes, along with multiple leadership roles, including serving as senior class president. She is also involved in extensive community service projects and has been a consistent force in female athletics at Weldon High School. Shaelyn will attend the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to major in computer science.

Aric Lipscomb, Bartlett Yancey High School

Aric is a three-sport athlete in football, track and field, and wrestling, qualifying for states in wrestling. He is involved in Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), which plays an important role in his everyday life outside of sports. Aric's dedication to athletics and leadership in his community set him apart.

John Malahias, Union High School

A multisport athlete and student leader, John joined basketball in his junior year and quickly became a key starter. Known for his sportsmanship and grit, he balances academics, athletics, and leadership roles in BETA Club and FFA.

Clara McCartha, McDowell High School

A basketball and volleyball player, Clara has overcome a hearing impairment to become a leader on and off the court. She volunteers at youth camps and shares her story with children diagnosed with hearing loss.

Jean-Marie Murry, Central Carolina Academy

A wrestling team member and student body vice president, Jean-Marie is known for his leadership and commitment to serving others through youth technology ministry and FCA.

Morgan Nixon, John A. Holmes High School

A three-sport tennis, basketball, and softball athlete, Morgan has maintained a 4.25 weighted GPA while dual-enrolling at the College of the Albemarle. She has accumulated over 40 hours volunteering as a teacher assistant and is heavily involved in church and youth service activities.

Kaden Parker, John A. Holmes High School

A dedicated three-sport soccer, football, and baseball athlete, Kaden leads by example and gives back to his community through Serve Day at church and mentoring youth through Cross Trail Outfitters.

Ryan Parkins, McDowell High School

A two-time Conference Player of the Year in basketball, Ryan leads school mentorship programs and has overcome major health challenges to remain an active and impactful student-athlete.

Brianna Quiroz, Franklin High School

Brianna is a standout cheerleader with multiple championship titles, including NCCCA State and National Championships, All-Region, All-State, and UCA All-American honors. Despite significant personal challenges, she maintains academic excellence with a 4.21 GPA while contributing to her community and school through leadership roles in HOSA and Student Leadership. Her resilience, selflessness, and remarkable achievements make her a true champion both on and off the field.

Addix Sutton, Franklin High School

A leader both on and off the field, Addix excels in football, basketball, and baseball. He has earned multiple Player of the Week honors, is a two-time All-Conference football player, and holds leadership positions in FHS Student Leadership and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. His dedication and character shine, even in the face of personal challenges, and he is a true example of perseverance and humility.

The NCHSAA congratulates all of the 2024-2025 Heart of a Champion recipients for their outstanding character and contributions to their schools and communities.