

NCHSAA Announces 2025-2026

State Award Recipients



GREENSBORO — The North Carolina High School Athletic Association recognized some of the state's most outstanding contributors to education-based athletics during its annual awards ceremony this morning at Piedmont Hall, honoring excellence in coaching, athletic administration, school leadership, media coverage, and student-athlete achievement.

Tim Stevens Media Representative of the Year

Veteran sportswriter Bob Sutton was named the 2025-2026 Tim Stevens Media Representative of the Year. Sutton spent 25 years as sports editor of the *Burlington Times-News*, where he covered high school athletics across multiple counties. A two-time North Carolina Sportswriter of the Year, Sutton has also contributed to the *Greensboro News & Record*, *Randolph Record*, and *The Alamance News*.

Harvey Reid Male Coach of the Year

Donald Davis of Cummings High School earned the Harvey Reid Male Coach of the Year Award after adding to one of the most accomplished coaching careers in North Carolina history. Davis guided the Cavaliers' women's indoor and outdoor track and field programs to state championships during the 2025-26 school year, increasing his career total to 24 team state titles. His impact extends far beyond championships, as generations of student-athletes have benefited from his commitment to education, leadership, and personal growth.

Doris Howard Female Coach of the Year

Jennifer Baker of North Mecklenburg High School was selected as the Doris Howard Female Coach of the Year after leading the Vikings to the 2026 7A Women's Basketball State Championship. The title was North Mecklenburg's first women's basketball championship in 40 years. Baker, the program's all-time winningest coach with 326 victories, guided the Vikings to a 29-2 record while also serving as the school's interim athletic director.

Dave Harris Athletic Director of the Year

Alexis McCoy of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools was named the Dave Harris Athletic Director of the Year. McCoy became the first female athletic director for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools in 2023 and currently oversees athletics for 12 high schools. She has played a critical role in organizing NCHSAA championship events in Winston-Salem and has contributed to statewide initiatives, including service on the NCHSAA Flag Football Committee.

Bob Deaton Principal of the Year

Eric Yarbrough of Southeast Alamance High School received the Bob Deaton Principal of the Year Award. A longtime educator and coach, Yarbrough has built a student-centered culture focused on academic and athletic excellence. During the 2025-26 school year, Southeast Alamance advanced to the state semifinals or better in three sports and recorded state playoff victories in eight different team sports, reflecting the school's broad-based athletic success.

Bob McRae Superintendent of the Year

Dr. Stephen Gainey of Randolph County Schools was honored as the Bob McRae Superintendent of the Year. A former coach, teacher, principal, and district administrator, Gainey has served as superintendent since 2013. He has also spent the past seven years on the NCHSAA Board of Directors, including back-to-back terms as president. During his tenure, he helped oversee the implementation of the Association's eight-classification structure and supported the sanctioning of Girls' Flag Football and Boys' Volleyball.

Pat Best Female Athlete of the Year

Dvdaya Swimmer of Cherokee High School was named the Pat Best Female Athlete of the Year. One of the state's premier multi-sport athletes, Swimmer excelled in cross country, volleyball, basketball, and track and field. She helped Cherokee capture multiple state championships, scored 1,787 career basketball points, earned championship MVP honors, and achieved success at the highest levels of both indoor and outdoor track competition. She will continue her academic and athletic career at the University of Hawaii.

Pat Best Male Athlete of the Year

Dionte Neal of Reidsville High School was selected as the Pat Best Male Athlete of the Year after an extraordinary four-sport career. Neal helped Reidsville win two state championships in both football and basketball while earning football championship MVP and basketball state championship Most Outstanding Player honors. He concluded his career among the state's all-time leaders in basketball scoring and assists while also excelling in football, baseball, and track and field. Neal will continue his basketball career at UNC Greensboro.