



WPIAL HALL OF FAME, CLASS OF 2021

INDUCTEES BY CATEGORY:

Athletes:	Natalie Bower Toman Michaela Kissell Eddins Rob Gagliani James Gulibon Ed Josefoski Katie Miller Gee Samantha Pickens Darrelle Revis	Greater Latrobe H.S. Greater Latrobe H.S. Avella H.S. Derry Area H.S. Penn Hills H.S. Hempfield H.S. Franklin Regional H.S. Aliquippa H.S.	Cross Country/Track Tennis Rifle Wrestling Volleyball Golf Diving Football
Coaches:	Gene Klein Joseph C. Maize	Quaker Valley H.S. Peters Township H.S.	Soccer Baseball
Teams:	1980 North Hills H.S. Softball Team, WPIAL & PIAA Champions 2004 Upper St. Clair H.S. Boys' Soccer Team, WPIAL & PIAA Champions		
Heritage:	Joe Tranchini	Clairton H.S.	Football, Basketball, Baseball
Official:	Tom Evans	Yough H.S.	Baseball & Softball
Contributors:	Amy Caprino, WPIAL Gymnastics Committee Chairperson David Hayes, WPIAL Board of Directors & WPIAL Scholarship Committee		
Courage:	Anthony Chiccitt	Bethel Park H.S.	Football, Basketball, Baseball

INDUCTEE BIOGRAPHIES:

Athletes

Natalie Bower Toman, Greater Latrobe – Cross Country/Track

As a freshman running in her first WPIAL cross country championship, Latrobe's Natalie Bower admitted afterward she was somewhat surprised that she'd won. The next three years, each time she returned to the Cooper's Lake Campground course near Slippery Rock, her winning performance was far less surprising. It was almost expected. The 2009 graduate established herself as one of the best runners in Western Pennsylvania history by becoming the first athlete, girl or boy, to win four consecutive WPIAL cross country titles in 2005-08. It's a record that can be tied but stands out as unbreakable. The expectations increased each year, but Bower never let the pressure to win distract her. As a senior, she won the WPIAL Class AAA title in 18 minutes, 4 seconds, a time on the 3.1-mile course that was 18 seconds faster than her closest competitor. Bower also added to her list of accolades with 4 consecutive titles at the Tri-State and County Championships (2010-2013). But her success wasn't limited to the fall. Bower also won eight WPIAL titles during track and field season, giving her 12 total WPIAL gold medals in her high school career. She won the WPIAL 1,600 meters three times, the 3,200 twice and was part of a 3,200-meter relay team that won three times. At the state level, Bower won PIAA gold in the 1,600 meters in 2009 and was the runner-up in 2008. She led her cross country team to a state title in 2005, and the Wildcats were state runners-up in 2008. After high school, Bower became a four-year letter winner and four-year Academic All-American in both cross country and track at Penn State. She qualified for the NCAA cross country championships four years in a row, a feat achieved by only six previous Penn State female athletes. As a Nittany Lions senior, she earned second-team All-America status by placing 15th nationally in the 3,000-meter steeplechase and was the Penn Relay's Steeplechase Champion.

Michaela Kissell Eddins, Greater Latrobe – Tennis

Latrobe's Michaela Kissell-Eddins didn't lose a match in her first three seasons of high school tennis from 2003-05. Not in the regular season and not in the postseason. She won three section titles, three consecutive WPIAL titles and followed each with a PIAA championship in her freshman, sophomore and junior seasons. As a senior in 2006-07, knee surgery forced her to skip girls' tennis season in the fall. Once healthy, she chose to play boys tennis in the spring and still didn't lose a match until the quarterfinal round of the WPIAL Class AAA boys' singles tournament. After high school, Kissell-Eddins played two seasons at college tennis powerhouse Miami (Fla.) before transferring to Marshall, where she earned all-conference honors twice and was ranked as the No. 1 player in the Atlantic Region both years. She also was named Conference USA Newcomer of the Year in 2010. In two seasons at Marshall, Kissell-Eddins went 110-41 combined in singles and doubles matches. She was ranked as high as No. 27 in singles and No. 23 in doubles. Her singles record of 55-21 ranked as the fourth-best winning percentage (72.3%) in Marshall history and her doubles record (55-20, 73.3%) ranked ninth best. After college, Kissell-Eddins entered coaching, including stints as head coach at Pitt and Western Carolina. As a high school player, it wasn't just the victories, but also the dominance with which she won that was most amazing. In her first three WPIAL and PIAA girls' tournaments combined, she lost only one set. In fact, while cruising through the three state brackets, Kissell-Eddins won 139 of the 169 games she played and won every final in straight sets. In 2003, she won 6-2, 6-4 in the state finals. She won 6-1, 6-0 in 2004, and 6-0, 1-0 in 2005, when her opponent retired with an injury.

Rob Gagliani, Avella – Rifle

When it comes to WPIAL rifle champions, Rob Gagliani's record is the one that competitors continue to target. The 2009 Avella graduate is the only shooter in WPIAL history to win three rifle titles. Gagliani won them consecutively in 2007-09. The WPIAL has crowned rifle champions since the 1940s, and no other competitor won three titles. That earned Gagliani the honor of being the first rifle competitor inducted into the WPIAL Hall of Fame. At the state level, Gagliani placed in the top 10 all three seasons and won a PIAA championship as a senior in 2009. His winning score of 397-30c edged his next-closest competitor by a single point. Gagliani went on to shoot in college at Morehead State, earning second-team all-conference honors in the Ohio Valley Conference and the Western Intercollegiate Rifle Conference. In high school, Gagliani won his first WPIAL title as a sophomore, when he and two others finished in a three-way tie with perfect 200-20x scores. A year later, there was a seven-way tie for first place, but Gagliani secured a WPIAL title all alone in 2009 with a near-perfect score of 200-19x. While at Avella, Gagliani also found success outside of school. Among his accomplishments, he led the Pennsylvania 4-H Rifle team to a silver medal at the National Shooting Sports as an air rifle specialist. He also won silver medals in the three-position Civilian Marksmanship Program and the 40-shot standing matches at nationals.

James Gulibon, Derry Area – Wrestling

If winning a state title is a dream come true for high school wrestlers, Jimmy Gulibon lived that dream as a freshman, sophomore, junior and senior. The 2012 Derry Area graduate is one of only 13 athletes in state history to win four PIAA wrestling titles. He also won a WPIAL title each year, a feat only 28 others have accomplished, and won the Powerade Tournament four times, as well. Gulibon graduated from Derry with a 136-4 career record before becoming a standout wrestler at Penn State, where he was a four-time NCAA Tournament qualifier. He posted a 75-47 record as a four-year starter for the Nittany Lions. At Derry, Gulibon never lost more than one match in a season. He went 39-1 as a 103-pound freshman and won WPIAL and PIAA Class 3A titles in 2009. He moved up to 112 pounds as a sophomore and won both titles en route to a 36-1 record. Derry moved to Class 2A for his junior year, and Gulibon again went 36-1, winning WPIAL, Southwest Regional and PIAA titles at 119 pounds. As a senior at 126 pounds, a midseason knee injury caused him to miss more than a month. But he battled his way back to the mat and again won all three postseason tournaments, finishing with a 25-1 record. He later took part in the Dapper Dan Wrestling Classic. At Penn State, Gulibon's best season was his sophomore year, when he went 26-9, placed fifth nationally at 133 pounds and earned all-American honors. He went 18-15 as a 133-pound freshman at Penn State, 14-11 as a junior and 17-12 as a senior, both at 141 pounds. The Nittany Lions won two Big Ten team titles and three NCAA titles in his four seasons. As a junior, Gulibon was the Big Ten runner-up in his weight class.

Ed Josefoski, Penn Hills – Volleyball

No college volleyball team outside of California had won an NCAA men's tournament title until Ed Josefoski's Penn State team came along in 1994. With 18 kills and 12 digs from the 6-foot-5 outside hitter and team captain, the Nittany Lions defeated perennial powerhouse UCLA in the NCAA finals, breaking the historic shutout held by the Golden State schools. But winning titles wasn't unusual for Josefoski, a 1990 Penn Hills graduate and the first four-year letterman in Indians boys' volleyball history. As Penn Hills' team captain, Josefoski led the team to consecutive WPIAL titles in 1989-90, and won the state title in 1990, as one of the most-successful boys volleyball players in Western Pennsylvania history. He earned first-team all-WPIAL and first-team all-state honors as a junior and senior. Additionally, Volleyball Magazine selected him for its "Fab 50," ranking him as one of the nation's top high school players his senior year. But volleyball wasn't his only sport. The versatile athlete also was a leading scorer for the Penn Hills boys' basketball team, a Dapper Dan Roundball Classic selection and a two-time all-section honoree who could have played Division I hoops. Along with Penn State, he was recruited by several top college volleyball programs including Southern Cal, Stanford, UC Santa Barbara, BYU and the U.S. Naval Academy. At Penn State, Josefoski had the unusual distinction of being the only player in NCAA volleyball history to finish first, second, third and fourth at the NCAA championships. After winning the NCAA title in 1994, the Nittany Lions were national runners-up in 1995. Penn State also won four EIVA conference titles with Josefoski, the conference championship MVP in 1994. Twice, Josefoski was named an NCAA All-American by the American Volleyball Coaches Association, in 1994 and 1995. His career resume also includes international competition. He medaled at two U.S. Olympic Festivals (1991, 1993), trained with the U.S. men's national team in 1995, and was a member of the U.S. roster at the 1995 World University Games in Fukuoka, Japan. Josefoski played professionally in Brazilian Superior League in 1995-96.

Katie Miller Gee, Hempfield – Golf

Katie Miller arrived at York's Springwood Golf Club in 2002 with an opportunity to make history and the Hempfield senior didn't leave anything to chance. Miller took a five-shot lead after the first round of the state tournament and cruised to a dominant 11-stroke victory the next day, becoming only the second girl statewide to win three PIAA golf championships. She also won the PIAA title as a freshman and sophomore and finished as the state runner-up her junior season. Her WPIAL tournament record included four Top 3 finishes including a championship in 2002. She was the WPIAL runner-up in 2001 and 1999 and tied for third in 2000. Her first PIAA title came as a freshman on Penn State's White Course. Miller's rounds of 75 and 70 earned her a five-stroke victory. A year later, Miller returned to Penn State, shot rounds of 73 and 74, and won again, this time by three strokes. After a runner-up finish her junior season, Miller returned as a senior and ran away with the title with a 5-over 149, making her the first WPIAL girls' golfer with three state titles. Along with golf, Miller lettered in track and basketball at Hempfield. After high school, Miller was a two-time All-ACC golfer at the University of North Carolina, where she started every tournament for the Tar Heels in her four seasons. She competed professionally on the LPGA Futures Tour for two seasons (2009-10) before reclaiming her amateur status in 2014. A year later, Miller won the Pennsylvania Women's Amateur in 2015 at Sewickley Heights Golf Club, she also claimed PA Amateur titles in 2007 and 2017. Miller also had 14 starts in United States Golf Association national championships.

Samantha Pickens, Franklin Regional – Diving

As a diver at the University of Arizona, Samantha Pickens won two NCAA titles in the women's one-meter springboard, a championship repeat that shouldn't have surprised anyone who watched her compete at Franklin Regional. Whenever she won a title, she always seemed to win it again. In high school, Pickens won four consecutive PIAA Class AAA titles from 2007-10, making her the first girl to win four in a row at Pennsylvania's highest classification. She also won three consecutive WPIAL titles in 2008-10, writing and rewriting the championship record book each time. Her WPIAL-winning score improved more than 60 points in those three years, climbing from 542.25 as a sophomore to 605.55 as a senior, a mark that remains the WPIAL championship record today. That success continued in Arizona, where Pickens won NCAA 1-meter titles in 2013 and 2015. In between, she won gold at the USA Diving Winter National Championships in 2014. Additionally, Pickens won a bronze medal in 2015 at the FINA Puerto Rico Grand Prix in the 3-meter. Injuries tested Pickens, who showed resilience during her high school and college career. She won the state title her freshman year at Franklin Regional despite a stress fracture in a vertebra that later required her to wear a brace for months. The injury recurred during her freshman year at Arizona, but she continued to compete. As a two-time NCAA champion, she was named to the Pac-12 All-Century Team in 2016, a 32-person collection of the best divers and swimmers in conference history. In her three trips to the NCAA championships, Pickens finished fourth, first and first in the 1-meter competition, and third, second and eighth in the 3-meter. She's since competed internationally, including a FINA competition in February 2020 in Madrid, Spain.

Darrelle Revis, Aliquippa – Football

Tales are told about the December day in 2003 when Darrelle Revis showed the football world that he was special, long before the future Pitt star and NFL All-Pro established Revis Island. As a senior at Aliquippa, Revis scored five touchdowns in the PIAA Class AA final at Hersheypark Stadium and the Quips defeated Northern Lehigh, 32-27, for a come-from-behind win that ranks among the best individual performances in state championship history. Revis rushed for three touchdowns, returned a punt 89 yards for another and scored on a 69-yard blocked field goal return in the state championship game, while also catching a pass, completing a pass, intercepting a pass and making five tackles. One of the most versatile athletes in WPIAL history, Revis saw time that season at quarterback, running back, wide receiver, cornerback and kick returner. Two days after the state championship, Revis dazzled the WPIAL once again when he scored 35 points on the basketball court as Aliquippa defeated rival Beaver Falls, 86-82, in overtime. Revis was the Associated Press Pennsylvania Class AA Football Player of the Year as a senior after totaling 1,637 yards for the 14-1 Quips and averaged 22.8 points that school year in basketball. He scored 1,722 points in three basketball seasons at Aliquippa. The multi-sport star also was part of a 400-meter relay team that won WPIAL gold and placed third in the state. Revis carried that success to Pitt and later the NFL, where he played 11 seasons, earned All-Pro honors four times, was selected for the Pro Bowl seven times, celebrated a Super Bowl XLIX victory with the New England Patriots and was named to the NFL's All-Decade Team for the 2010's. Revis played 145 games in the NFL for the New York Jets, Patriots, Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Kansas City Chiefs. The cornerback had 29 career interceptions, and his position on the field was nicknamed "Revis Island" because of his ability to isolate an opponent's top receiver. At Pitt, Revis drew Freshman All-American honors from The Sporting News, and later earned first-team All-Big East honors as a sophomore and junior. ESPN selected his 73-yard punt return against West Virginia as the 2006 College Football Play of the Year.

Coaches

Gene Klein, Quaker Valley – Soccer

Gene Klein's name is synonymous with Quaker Valley soccer, but his impact on the game is seen across Western Pennsylvania, as well. Klein successfully coached the Quakers for 29 seasons, with a six-year pause in the middle when he coached the Pittsburgh Riverhounds. He won more than 500 boys soccer games, seven WPIAL titles, appeared in ten state finals and won a state-record six PIAA championships at Quaker Valley. His first and last state titles came 15 years apart, showing the winning consistency that Klein maintained in his program. His best team was 1996, an undefeated group that was inducted into the WPIAL Hall of Fame in 2013. Now, their coach joins them. That team went 26-0 while winning WPIAL and PIAA titles. The Quakers were ranked No. 1 nationally by the Nation Soccer Coaches Association of America, and Klein was named as the NSCAA national coach of the year. The team outscored opponents 169-7 and recorded shutouts in 21 games. But that wasn't the only championship team under Klein's watch. The Quakers won PIAA titles in 1985, '91, '93, '95, '96 and 2000, a coaching resume that includes a remarkable four state titles in a six-year span. His career record is 505-139-38, including a 40-7-1 mark in the state playoffs. In 29 years, his players accounted for 23 all-state selections and five national all-Americans. After leading Quaker Valley to the state finals in 2005, Klein resigned to become coach of the Riverhounds, a professional soccer club that he'd been associated with almost since its founding. Prior to coaching Quaker Valley, Klein was head coach at Carnegie Mellon for four seasons but was lured the Leetsdale to take over a promising high school program in its second year of existence. Along with coaching high school soccer, the former goalkeeper has worked extensively in youth soccer and currently is a scout for the youth national teams of the United States Soccer Federation. He's also written three books about goalkeeping.

Joseph C. Maize, Peters Township – Baseball

Physical education teacher. Drivers education teacher. Assistant Athletic Director. Girls basketball coach. Middle school boys basketball coach. Girls softball coach. Ninth-grade boys soccer coach. Faculty manager and Athletic Director for 20 years. Name a job at Peters Township, and there's a good chance Joe Maize worked it during his four decades at the school. But one stands out: baseball coach. Maize successfully led the Indians baseball team for 35 years and built the program into one of the WPIAL's best since taking over in 1985. He won more than 400 games, eight section titles, two WPIAL championships and reached the state finals twice before retiring in 2019. His career record was 422-241. Some programs may fade over time, but Maize's certainly did not. In fact, since 2003, the Indians won 71% of their games. But his success isn't measured in wins alone. He's seen more than 100 former players continue their baseball careers in college and eight former Indians went on to play professionally. Three reached the Major Leagues: Chris Peters (Pittsburgh Pirates), Brian Simmons (Chicago White Sox/Toronto Blue Jays) and Jordan Jankowski (Houston Astros). Peters Township qualified for the WPIAL playoffs 17 times under Maize and reached the finals on three occasions. The Indians won consecutive WPIAL titles in 2007-08 and were runners-up in 2011. At the state level, Peters Township was the PIAA runner-up in 2004 and 2005. He earned six coach of the year awards including multiple honors from the Tri-County Athletic Directors Association. In his final season, the Big 56 Conference named him coach of the year in Section 3-6A. Maize was Peters Township's girls softball coach from 1978-84 before making the move to the baseball team. While coaching baseball, he also had stints as a middle school boys basketball coach (2012-13) and ninth-grade boys soccer coach (2012-13). Maize also contributed his efforts to the WPIAL including as a member of the soccer steering committee for 34 years.

Teams

1980 North Hills Softball Team

The PIAA held its first state softball tournament in 1975, but for the first five years, no WPIAL team reached the finals. That changed in 1980, when North Hills took the state by storm. Led by pitcher Leigh Curl, a steady defense and a great-hitting lineup, coach Denny Papalia's Indians went 25-1 and became the first WPIAL softball team to win a PIAA title. Nine players had a batting average better than .300. That run support was plenty for Curl, who was inducted individually into the WPIAL Hall of Fame in 2017. She went 14-0 with an 0.34 ERA and batted .380 with 30 RBIs. The Indians outscored opponents 23-6 in the WPIAL playoffs and allowed only three runs in the PIAA tournament, which was held over five consecutive days. In the finals, Curl pitched a two-hitter and North Hills defeated North Penn, 2-1, at Shippensburg University's Robb Field to finish unbeaten in the double-elimination tournament. The championship was a milestone win for the WPIAL. It was 19 years before another WPIAL softball team won the state's largest classification in 1999. Curl went on to become a 1,000-point scorer for the UConn women's basketball team. She was named the Post-Gazette Softball Player of the Year in 1980, but she wasn't the only star athlete on the roster. Melanie Lees batted .369, Mary Maloney batted .338 and Linda Massucci hit .344. Massucci also went 10-0 with a 1.97 ERA as a pitcher. Lees later played basketball at Kansas State, Maloney played basketball at St. Bonaventure and Massucci played volleyball and softball at Clarion. Rhonda Caye, ranked among the WPIAL's top outfielders that season, also played softball at Clarion. All five are inducted into the North Hills Athletic Hall of Fame. North Hills defeated Mt. Lebanon, 9-3, in the 1980 WPIAL finals.

2004 Upper St. Clair Boys Soccer Team

It's no exaggeration to say the 2004 Upper St. Clair boys' soccer team had maybe the most dominant season in Western Pennsylvania high school soccer history. With a veteran roster that included 17 seniors and 10 in the starting lineup, coach Uwe Schneider's Panthers went 27-0 that year, won the WPIAL title and repeated at PIAA Class AAA champions. Clearly the best team in the state, they also finished the season ranked No. 1 nationally in a Student-Sports poll after defeating West Chester Henderson, 2-0, in the state finals at Hershey Park Stadium. The team also was ranked No. 1 by National Soccer Coaches Association of America. Never before had a WPIAL boys soccer team won consecutive Class AAA titles, but this group wasn't like most others. With seven future college players on the field, the team was unmatched all season. Upper St. Clair scored 111 goals, allowed only nine and shut out 18 opponents. No team scored more than a single goal against USC's defense. In the WPIAL playoffs, USC defeated Hempfield, 9-0, Peters Township, 5-0, Fox Chapel, 3-0, and Chartiers Valley, 3-1, in the finals. The PIAA playoffs included wins over Allerdice, 5-0, Fox Chapel, 3-1, Manheim Central, 2-0, and West Chester Henderson, 2-0. Combined, USC outscored its eight postseason opponents 32-2. Senior forward Andy Machi led with a team-high 22 goals, and senior midfielder Scott Dillie had 17. Machi later played at Penn State and Dillie played at Virginia Tech. Five others also went on to play college soccer: goalkeeper Andrew Baldasare (West Virginia Wesleyan), goalkeeper Joe Diederich (Xavier), Brett Fackenthal (West Virginia Wesleyan), Cam Griffin (Davidson) and Mitchell Miner (Allegheny). The other starters were Matt McClintock, Eric Feduska, Cole Conboy, Michael Walters-Slezak and Chris Sukenik. The seniors finished their high school careers with a 31-game winning streak that stretched over two seasons.

Heritage

Joe Tranchini, Clairton – Football, Basketball, Baseball

A dramatic black-and-white photo appeared in newspapers across the country on Jan. 2, 1958, capturing Navy quarterback Joe Tranchini pushing his way between two Rice defenders and into the end zone for the first touchdown in that year's Cotton Bowl. However, across Western Pennsylvania, folks were already well aware of Tranchini's athletic talents. The 1955 Clairton graduate led the Bears to a WPIAL Class AA football title in 1954 as a quarterback and defensive back under legendary coach Neil C. Brown. More than three decades later, fans voted Tranchini as one of 23 players on the Western Pennsylvania All-Time Scholastic Team put together by the Pittsburgh Press in 1989. A multi-sport athlete, Tranchini earned nine varsity letters at Clairton in football (1952, '53, '54), basketball (1953, '54, '55) and baseball (1953, '54, '55). As a senior, he was elected captain of both the football and baseball teams and was named Clairton High School's "Most Outstanding in Sports" male athlete in the Class yearbook. The Pittsburgh Pirates invited the high school catcher to two professional baseball tryouts in the spring of 1955, but the honor roll student instead accepted a partial academic scholarship to Bullis Preparatory School in Silver Spring, Md. He went on to become a three-year varsity letterman at the U.S. Naval Academy (1957, '58, '59), playing both offense and defense, and was chosen to play in the 1959 North-South all-star game in Miami, Fla. Tranchini scored the first touchdown in the 1958 Cotton Bowl on a 1-yard run to give Navy a 6-0 first quarter lead over Rice. Navy won 20-7 with 75,504 fans in the stands. Sports Illustrated highlighted Tranchini as the magazine's "Back of the Week" in its Oct. 11, 1958 edition. He also was chosen as an Academic All-American in 1958, was selected as the second-team quarterback on the All-East team and was an honored invitee at the Dapper Dan Awards banquet in Pittsburgh. In Tranchini's final year at the Academy, he played a key role in leading Navy to a 43-12 victory over Army, while completing 10 of 13 passes, scoring two touchdowns on the ground, and passing for three two-point conversions. At graduation, Tranchini was named as the recipient of the Naval Academy's annual award for Outstanding Leadership in Varsity Football.

Official

Tom Evans, Yough – Baseball

In the summer of 1978, while most boys in his hometown of Donora were playing baseball, 16-year-old Tom Evans was umpiring youth league baseball for \$2 a game. Tom's love for baseball led him to take the PIAA baseball official's test at age 18. That was the start of an outstanding PIAA baseball and softball officiating career that lasted more than 35 years. In 1983, as a 21-year-old official, his work caught the eye of WPIAL executive director Charles "Ace" Heberling, and Evans began working WPIAL postseason games. He soon became a permanent fixture at the WPIAL and PIAA championships. Over the years, he's officiated at least 15 WPIAL baseball championship games and at least three PIAA baseball finals. In addition, Evans also officiated college baseball in the tri-state area and has volunteered as a clinic instructor for numerous local and state baseball organizations. In 2010, Evans was appointed athletic director at Yough School District after 16 years as Assistant AD, which led to his retirement from active baseball officiating. He's served as an educator for 36 years. His past and present contributions to the WPIAL include golf steering committee member, financial tournament manager of the wrestling committee, liaison for the football and soccer championships at Heinz Field and Highmark Stadium, member of the WPIAL Hall of Fame committee, and member of the WPIAL board of directors. He is a past president of the WPIAL Athletic Directors Association and has served as a mentor for new administrators throughout the region. His work as an administrator earned him the WPIAL Athletic Director of the Year award in 2016, and in 2019 Evans received the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association Distinguished Sport of Merit at the State Athletic Directors Conference in Hershey.

Charles "ACE" Heberling Contributor Awardee

Amy Caprino, Moon – Gymnastics

Simply put, Amy Caprino is WPIAL gymnastics. If not for the passion and commitment of the longtime Moon coach, the WPIAL would not sponsor the sport, said WPIAL Executive Director, Tim O'Malley, adding that Caprino is the reason Western Pennsylvania girls have the opportunity to compete in interscholastic gymnastics. Caprino has coached Moon's team for 40 seasons, leading the Tigers to six WPIAL championships (2008, '12, '13, '14, '17 and '18) and eight PA Classic titles (2007, '08, '09, '12, '13, '14, '16, '17 & '20) since 1980. But her dedication to the sport as a whole is even more remarkable. Caprino has served as chairman of the WPIAL gymnastics steering committee for more than two decades. She led the effort to keep gymnastics as a WPIAL-sanctioned sport even after the PIAA discontinued its sponsorship after the 1993-94 season. With the PIAA no longer crowning state titlists, Caprino started the PA Classic to keep the state championships alive. The WPIAL had 27 girls' gymnastics teams in 1980, and previously had as many as 35, but that number dropped in recent decades to as low as four. Her efforts helped lift that total back to 14 schools with a couple of others now thinking about joining. Statewide there are less than 30 schools participating in gymnastics. Caprino, a 1972 Rochester graduate, was a member of the school's gymnastics team for two years. Gymnastics can appear to be a sport for individuals, but as Moon's coach, Caprino stressed the team aspect. Everyone must contribute to win a WPIAL or PA Classic title, she said. In 2009, Moon won the PA Classic title by one-thousandth of a point (.001). In 2008, the Tigers won by 35-hundredths (.35). Under her leadership, Moon's program grew to be one of the best programs in the state.

Charles "ACE" Heberling Contributor Awardee

David W. Hays, Moon – Administrator

Hays wasn't an athlete, coach or official, but his impact on the WPIAL was indisputable, nonetheless. The retired Moon Area principal was a dedicated member of the WPIAL Board of Control (now Board of Directors) until his retirement in 2000 and served 21 years on the WPIAL Student Athlete Scholarship Committee. His tenure with the WPIAL started with an early-morning call from Executive Director Charles "Ace" Heberling. Hays was in Orlando, Fla., at the time with the school's marching band, and Hays wondered whether the call was bad news. He'd appeared before the WPIAL board not too long before the trip for a hearing involving the Moon soccer team. But this call came because Heberling wanted Hays to join the board and needed his resume immediately. "Hays, we want you on the Board of Control," Heberling said sternly. "I need your resume by 3 o'clock today." Hays later served several years as a WPIAL representative on the PIAA Board of Control. A graduate of Moon in 1961 and Edinboro University in 1965, Hays began his education career as a social studies teacher at North Hills before returning to his high school alma mater to teach American History. After earning his master's degree and principal certification from Duquesne University, Hays joined Moon's administration as an assistant principal in 1976 and then high school principal in 1986.

Courage Award Winner

Anthony Chiccitt, Bethel Park – Football, Basketball, Baseball

Anthony Chiccitt overcame cancer with the same focus that made him successful in football, basketball and baseball. Chiccitt didn't talk a lot about his illness. Instead, he attacked it. The three-sport Bethel Park standout was diagnosed with Hodgkin Lymphoma in February 2019, a cancer that spread to his neck, chest, stomach and pelvis. The Stage 4 diagnosis and subsequent treatment interrupted his junior season of basketball. But by spring, Chiccitt was already back on the baseball field making a courageous return as a starting infielder for the Black Hawks. He batted .286 with a .485 on-base percentage for a team that won the section title and reached the WPIAL Class 6A semifinals. As a senior, Chiccitt's story became even more remarkable. He passed for more than 1,000 yards as Bethel Park's starting quarterback and then helped the basketball team reach the WPIAL quarterfinals. "In whatever sport he is playing, Anthony is always prepared," former Bethel Park football coach Jeff Metheny said in an interview with The Almanac. "He knows his competition and how to attack and win. With his cancer, he read up on the disease and the treatment. He readied himself for the fight and confidently set out to beat it." Chiccitt underwent four rounds of treatment, each lasting 21 days, with his final session of chemotherapy in April 2019. His recovery also required surgery to remove a lymph node. He lost weight and his hair, but all the while, Chiccitt always stayed focused and never complained, said those around him. "Anthony's an inspiration," former Bethel Park baseball coach Tony Fisher told The Almanac. "He went about his business and did whatever he could to help his team win. I'm not sure how many other kids would have played a sport under those circumstances. That's how tough and absolutely dedicated he is. He could've easily bowed out ... but that's not his style." For his basketball performances, Chiccitt was selected to play in the Round-Ball Classic his senior year and committed in January to continue his football career at Robert Morris University.