for OVAC 'Coach of the Year' award

JIM ELLIOTT FOR THE JEFFERSONIAN

WHEELING, W.Va. — Some say winning isn't everything: it's the only thing. While that's not likely the mindset of the five finalists for the Wheeling News-Register/Bill Van Horne OVAC Coach of the Year Award, it's basically all they knew during the last 12 months.

In most cases, it's been much longer than that,

For Wheeling Central boys' basketball coach Mel Stephens. St. John Central cross country coach Jeremy Midei. St. John girls' track coach Bubba Kapral, Monroe Central girls' basketball coach Troy Baker. and Meadowbrook golf coach Mel Pesuit, the victories piled up at a near-record pace during the 2008-09 school year.

With more than 500 coaches in the OVAC, these guys are in the top 1 percent in their class. Included are the leaders of three state championship teams and multiple sectional, district, and regional titlists. Every one of them guided at least one OVAC championship team during the school year, with Baker at the helm of two OVAC champions (also volleyball).

Mel Pesuit Meadowbrook Golf

Pesuit, who has led his teams to five OVAC atitles in 16 seasons, is a three-time Ohio Division 11 Eastern District Coach of the Year. His Colts finished this season with a 17-6 dual match record and 119-47 overall record. Included in that was first-place finishes in the East Central Ohio League



Mel Pesuit

(ECOL) Tournament, the OVAC Class AAA Tournament, and the Ohio Division II District Tournament. They wound up in eighth place in their first state-tournament appearance.

During Pesuit's career, his teams have compiled a 235-183 dual match record and an overall record of 1,172-866. That includes two sectional championships, six district tourney appearances, including a district title.

He has coached four OVAC tournament medalists, 22 all-OVAC golfers, and one Eastern District Player of the Year. Thirteen Meadowbrook golfers have gone on to play collegiately under Pesuit.

Bubba Kapral

St. John track and field

Kapral, a four-time finalist for this award and last year's recipient, guided his girls' track team to its second consecutive Ohio Division III state track and field championship.

This time, it wasn't even close. The St. John girls scored in a record 11 events at the 2008 state tourney, won two gold medals (4X100 and 4X200) with the 4X200 relay team setting

teams have won a league record eight consecutive OVAC track and field titles and 11 overall in Kapral's 21 seasons. He's a six-time Eastern District Coach of the Year last six years.

Kapral is also the girls' basketball coach at St. John, where his teams have won more than 200 games and eight more OVAC crowns.

Mel Stephens

Wheeling Central boys' basketball

Stephens, a two-time finalist for this award, is a couple of months removed from leading Wheeling Central to its sixth West Virginia Class A state championship in eight seasons, including fourth in six years under his guidance. Stephens ushered the Maroon Knights to a 23-5 record this season, and he has a career record 124-37, winning an astounding 77 percent of his games. He has overseen five sectional and regional championship teams in his six seasons.

Stephens' Maroon Knights also won a fourth consecutive OVAC title, three in Class AA and one in Class AAA. Prior to being named the head boys' basketball coach, Stephens was an assistant on Dave Wojcick's back-to-back state title winning teams. This season, he added the title of JV baseball coach to his name, along with his son, Chris, a former multi-sport standout at Wheeling Central.

Jeremy Midei St. John Cross Country

In his fifth season in charge of the St. John cross country program. Midei led his boys to their first Ohio Division III State Championship after years of knocking on the door. In the previous three seasons, Midei's runners finished no worse than seventh in the state, while his girls' team finished sixth in 2007.

So dominant were the Irish boys, they were undefeated against Division II and Division III competition, with their only losses to three Division I schools.

His boys' teams are four-time defending regional and district champions and they've completely dominated the OVAC meet. The Irish have won six straight OVAC Class A/AA championships, a record for most consecutive titles. His girls' teams were district and regional champions in 2006 and 2007 and OVAC champions from '05-07.

Also an assistant on Kapral's track and field teams. Midei helped lead the girls' team's four-year run of back-to-back state runner-up finishes, followed by back-to-back state championships.

All told, Midei has coached more than 50 individual OVAC champions in track.

Troy Baker

Monroe Central girls' basketball

Baker led his girls' basketball team to a second consecutive OVAC Class AA title, a Pioneer Valley Conference title, and Ohio Division III sectional and district titles in 2008. The Seminoles, led by senior stars Aleisha Guiler and Karlie Davis, went 21-4, losing to powerfor the Wheeling News-Register/Bill Van Horne OVAC Coach of the Year Award, it's basically all they knew during the last 12 months.

In most cases, it's been much longer than that.

For Wheeling Central boys' basketball coach Mel Stephens, St. John Central cross country coach Jeremy Midei, St. John girls' track coach Bubba Kapral, Monroe Central girls' basketball coach Troy Baker, and Meadowbrook golf coach Mel Pesuit, the victories piled up at a near-record pace during the 2008-09 school year.

With more than 500 coaches in the OVAC, these guys are in the top 1 percent in their class. Included are the leaders of three state championship teams and multiple sectional, district, and regional titlists. Every one of them guided at least one OVAC championship team during the school year, with Baker at the helm of two OVAC champions (also volleyball).

Mel Pesuit Meadowbrook Golf

Pesuit, who has ledhis teams to five OVAC titles in 16 seasons, is a three-time Ohio Division 11 Eastern District Coach of the Year. His Colts finished this season with a 17-6 dual match record and 119-47 overall record. Included in that was first-place finishes in the East Central Ohio League



Mel Pesuit

(ECOL) Tournament, the OVAC Class AAA Tournament, and the Ohio Division II District Tournament. They wound up in eighth place in their first state-tournament appearance.

During Pesuit's career, his teams have compiled a 235-183 dual match record and an overall record of 1,172-866. That includes two sectional championships, six district tourney appearances, including a district title.

He has coached four OVAC tournament medalists, 22 all-OVAC golfers, and one Eastern District Player of the Year. Thirteen Meadowbrook golfers have gone on to play collegiately under Pesuit.

Bubba Kapral

St. John track and field

Kapral, a four-time finalist for this award and last year's recipient, guided his girls' track team to its second consecutive Ohio Division III state track and field championship.

This time, it wasn't even close. The St. John girls scored in a record 11 events at the 2008 state tourney, won two gold medals (4X100 and 4X200) with the 4X200 relay team setting all-time state record (1:42.77).

This continued a four-year run of dominance (back-to-back runner-up finishes, followed by back-to-back titles) for the Irish girls, who are perhaps the most dominant girls' track team in the history of the OVAC. To that end, Kapral's

games and eight more OVAC crowns. Mel Stephens

Wheeling Central boys' basketball

Stephens, a two-time finalist for this award, is a couple of months removed from leading Wheeling Central to its sixth West Virginia Class A state championship in eight seasons, including fourth in six years under his guidance. Stephens ushered the Maroon Knights to a 23-5 record this season, and he has a career record 124-37, winning an astounding 77 percent of his games. He has overseen five sectional and regional championship teams in his six seasons.

Stephens' Maroon Knights also won a fourth consecutive OVAC title, three in Class AA and one in Class AAA. Prior to being named the head boys' basketball coach. Stephens was an assistant on Dave Wojcick's back-to-back state title winning teams. This season, he added the title of JV baseball coach to his name, along with his son, Chris, a former multi-sport standout at Wheeling Central.

Jeremy Midei

St. John Cross Country

In his fifth season in charge of the St. John cross country program, Midei led his boys to their first Ohio Division III State Championship after years of knocking on the door. In the previous three seasons, Midei's runners finished no worse than seventh in the state, while his girls' team finished sixth in 2007.

So dominant were the Irish boys, they were undefeated against Division II and Division III competition, with their only losses to three Division I schools.

His boys' teams are four-time defending regional and district champions and they've completely dominated the OVAC meet. The Irish have won six straight OVAC Class A/AA championships, a record for most consecutive titles. His girls' teams were district and regional champions in 2006 and 2007 and OVAC champions from '05-07.

Also an assistant on Kapral's track and field teams. Midei helped lead the girls' team's four-year run of back-to-back state runner-up finishes, followed by back-to-back state championships.

All told, Midei has coached more than 50 individual OVAC champions in track.

Troy Baker

Monroe Central girls' basketball

Baker led his girls' basketball team to a second consecutive OVAC Class AA title, a Pioneer Valley Conference title, and Ohio Division III sectional and district titles in 2008. The Seminoles, led by senior stars Aleisha Guiler and Karlie Davis, went 21-4, losing to powerful Oak Hill in the school's first appearance in a regional tournament.

Baker has also led the Seminoles' wildly successful volleyball team to four consecutive OVAC Class AA titles. The Seminoles advanced to district tournament this season.

Coacnes

Continued from Page C1

Coach of the Year. His Colts finished this season with a 17-6 dual match record and 119-47 overall record. Included in that was first-place finishes in the East Central Ohio League (ECOL) Tournament, the OVAC Class AAA Tournament, and the Ohio Division II District Tournament. They wound up in eighth place in their first state-tournament appearance.

During Pesuit's career, his teams have compiled a 235-183 dual match record and an overall record of 1,172-866. That includes two sectional championships, six district tourney appearances, including a district title.

He has coached four OVAC tournament medalists, 22 all-OVAC golfers, and one Eastern District Player of the Year. Thirteen Meadowbrook golfers have gone on to play collegiately under Pesuit.

Bubba Kapral St. John track and field

Kapral, a four-time finalist for this award and last year's recipient, guided his girls' track team to its second consecutive Ohio Division III state track and field championship.

This time, it wasn't even close. The St. John girls scored in a record 11 events at the 2008 state meet, and won two gold medals (4X100 and 4X200) with the 4X200 relay team setting an all-time state record (1:42.77).

This continued a four-year run of dominance (back-toback runner-up finishes, followed by back-to-back titles) for the Irish girls, who are perhaps the most dominant girls' track team in the history of the OVAC. To that end, Kapral's teams have won a league record eight consecutive OVAC track and field titles and 11 overall in Kapral's 21 seasons. He's a six-time Eastern District Coach of the Year last six years.

Kapral is also the girls' basketball coach at St. John, where his teams have won more than 200 games and eight more OVAC crowns.

Mel Stephens

Wheeling Central boys' basketball

Stephens, a two-time finalist for this award, is a couple of months removed from leading Wheeling Central to its sixth West Virginia Class A state championship in eight seasons, including fourth in six years under his guidance. Stephens ushered the Maroon Knights to a 23-5 record this season, and he has a career record 124-37, winning an astounding 77 percent of his games. He has overseen five sectional and regional championship teams in his six seasons.

Stephens' Maroon Knights also won a fourth consecutive OVAC title - three in Class AA and one in Class AAA. Prior to being named the head boys' basketball coach, Stephens was an assistant on Dave Wojcick's backto-back state title winning teams. This season, he added the title of JV baseball coach to his name, along with his son, Chris, a former multi-sport standout at Wheeling Central.

Jeremy Midei St. John Cross Country

In his fifth season in charge of the St. John cross country program, Midei led his boys to their first Ohio Division III State Championship after years of knocking on the door. In the previous three seasons, Midei's runners finished no worse than seventh in the state, while his girls' team finished sixth in 2007.

So dominant were the Irish boys, they were undefeated against Division II and Division III competition, with their only losses to three Division I schools.

His boys' teams are four-time defending regional and district champions and they've completely dominated the OVAC meet. The Irish have won six straight OVAC Class A/AA championships, a record for most consecutive titles. His girls' teams were district and regional champions in 2006 and 2007 and OVAC champions from '05-07.

Also an assistant on Kapral's track and field teams, Midei helped lead the girls' team's four year run of back

By JIM ELLIOTT For The Times Leader In most cases, it's been much longer victories piled up at a near-record pace an that. during the 2008-09 school year. For Wheeling Central boys' bas- With more than 500 coaches in he PU Inounc D

Some say winning isn't everything; it's the only thing. While that's not likely the j mindset of the five finalists for the J Wheeling News-Register/Bill Van Horne OVAC Coach of the Year Award, it's basically all they knew during the last 12

John Central cross country coach Jeremy Midei, St. John girls, track coach Bubba Kapral, Monroe Central girls, basketball coach Troy Baker, and

Meadowbrook golf coach Mel Pesuit, the

and

guided at least one OVAC championship

regional titlists. Every one of them state championship teams and multiple sectional, district, and

Pesuit, who has led his teams to five OVAC titles in 16 seasons, is a three-time Ohio Division II Eastern District

Meadowbrook Golf

Mel Pesuit

See, COACHES, Page C2

team during the school year, with Baker at the helm of two OVAC champions

(also volleyball).

the OVAC, these guys are in the top 1 percent in their class. Included are the leaders of three

than that. For Wheeling Central boys' bas-ketball coach Mel Stephens, St.

months.

INSIDE Counsel / B6 Comics / B7 Comics / B

• St. John's Kapral, Wheeling Central's Stephens named OVAC's best mentors

By JIM ELLIOTT For The Times Leader

For the fourth time in its 40-year history, the Wheeling News-Register/Bill Van Horne OVAC Coach of the Year Award had two winners when it was announced Monday night at the annual OVAC Banquet of Champions at WesBanco Arena.

St. John Central track and field coach Robert "Bubba" Kapral and Wheeling

Central boys' basketball coach Mel Stephens – both leaders of back-to-back state championship teams in their respective sports – shared the honor. The last time the OVAC had co-coaches of the year was 2007 when Oak Glen wrestling coach Larry Shaw and Steubenville football coach Reno Saccoccia shared it.

"You win it once, that's as good as it gets," said Kapral, last year's lone recipi-

See, TOP, Page B2



NAMED AS OVAC co-Coaches of the Year during Monday night's banquet were Robert "Bubba" Kapral, left. and Mel Stephens, right. Doug Huff, center, presented the awards. Photo/JIM ELLIOTT

collegiately under Pesuit.

Bubba Kapral St. John track and field

Gene on to pray

Kapral, a four-time finalist for this award and last year's recipient, guided his girls' track team to its second consecutive Ohio Division III state track and field championship.

This time, it wasn't even close. The St. John girls scored in a record 11 events at the 2008 state meet, and won two gold medals (4X100 and 4X200) with the 4X200 relay team setting an all-time state record (1:42.77).

This continued a four-year run of dominance (back-toback runner-up finishes, followed by back-to-back titles) for the Irish girls, who are perhaps the most dominant girls' track team in the history of the OVAC. To that end, Kapral's teams have won a league record eight consecutive OVAC track and field titles and 11 overall in Kapral's 21 seasons. He's a six-time Eastern District Coach of the Year last six years.

Kapral is also the girls' basketball coach at St. John, where his teams have won more than 200 games and eight more OVAC crowns.

Mel Stephens

Wheeling Central boys' basketball

Stephens, a two-time finalist for this award, is a couple of months removed from leading Wheeling Central to its sixth West Virginia Class A state championship in eight seasons, including fourth in six years under his guidance. Stephens ushered the Maroon Knights to a 23-5 record this season, and he has a career record 124-37, winning an astounding 77 percent of his games. He has overseen five sectional and regional championship teams in his six seasons.

Stephens' Maroon Knights also won a fourth consecutive OVAC title - three in Class AA and one in Class AAA. Prior to being named the head boys' basketball coach, Stephens was an assistant on Dave Wojcick's backto-back state title winning teams. This season, he added the title of JV baseball coach to his name, along with his son, Chris, a former multi-sport standout at Wheeling Central.

Jeremy Midei

St. John Cross Country

In his fifth season in charge of the St. John cross country program, Midei led his boys to their first Ohio Division III State Championship after years of knocking on the door. In the previous three seasons, Midei's runners finished no worse than seventh in the state, while his girls' team finished sixth in 2007.

So dominant were the Irish boys, they were undefeated against Division II and Division III competition, with their only losses to three Division I schools.

His boys' teams are four-time defending regional and district champions and they've completely dominated the OVAC meet. The Irish have won six straight OVAC Class A/AA championships, a record for most consecutive titles. His girls' teams were district and regional champions in 2006 and 2007 and OVAC champions from '05-07.

Also an assistant on Kapral's track and field teams, Midei helped lead the girls' team's four-year run of backto-back state runner-up finishes, followed by back-to-back state championships.

All told, Midei has coached more than 50 individual OVAC champions in track.

Troy Baker

Monroe Central girls' basketball

Baker led his girls' basketball team to a second consecutive OVAC Class AA title, a Pioneer Valley Conference title, and Ohio Division III sectional and district titles in 2008. The Seminoles, led by senior stars Aleisha Guiler and Karlie Davis, went 21-4, losing to powerful Oak Hill in the school's first appearance in a regional tournament.

Baker has also led the Seminoles' wildly successful volleyball team to four consecutive OVAC Class AA titles. The Seminoles advanced to district tournament this season. Top

Continued from Page B1

ent. "To win it back to back. I never expected it."

Neither did Stephens, who viewed the award as much more of a team honor than an individual one.

"I haven't made a shot in a long time." he said. "Those guys go out and do all the hard work. My staff does a great job of scouting and getting them ready. It's an honor that I accept, but I accept it on behalf of a lot of different people."

Also nominated were St. John Central cross country coach Jeremy Midei, who most certainly had Kapral's support, a point Kapral made during his acceptance speech, Monroe Central girls' basketball coach Troy Baker, and Meadowbrook golf coach Mel Pesuit.

Kapral, a four-time finalist for the award, guided his girls' track team to its second consecutive Ohio Division III state track and field championship. The 2007 crown was shared with Gilmour Academy. Last year, they left no doubt, as they scored in a record 11 events and set a state scoring record with 69 points.

"Early on, we didn't deal with being state champions very well," Kapral said. "As it went on, the Steubenville Centrals and



the Wheeling Parks, when we competed against them. they made us better. And then, boom, once we rolled around to May, that success from the previous year and the leadership of the Natalie Perzanowskis, Kvlie Kidders, Justene Delmans and those people, said 'it's time again.' We've been through the wars with those people and every meet OVAC. regional. district, and state - they performed better and better.

A four-year run of domination like the St. John girls have experienced (back-toback state runner-up finishes, followed by back-toback titles) has left Kapral both humbled and honored since it began.

"Lost in the shuffle, I was happy the first year we were state runner-up," he said. "I thought that was as good as it gets. Then the state title, then the repeat. It's just unfathomable what the girls did and what the coaches did in Ohio. It's mindboggling to do it backto-back."

Stephens, who has twice been nominated – an honor in itself, he said – similarly guided his Maroon Knights' boys to back-to-back state championships. The program has won six of the last eight West Virginia Class A boys' basketball titles, with Stephens taking over for Dave Wojcik after the first two were in the books.

"I have to give Coach Wojcik because he had the confidence in me to recommend me for the job when he left," Stephens said. "And I have to thank Dr. (Joseph) Viglietta (the school's principal) for acting on that."

Stephens, who has led the Maroon Knights to four consecutive OVAC boys' basketball championships, has a career record of 124-37. He has overseen five sectional and regional championship teams in his six seasons as head coach.

WEST DISCUSSES HEART AILMENT

Former West Virginia and Lakers star Jerry West has been dealing with atrial filbrillation for decades/18

The Intelligencer. ORTS **Kapral, Stephens Share**

Duo led teams

to state crowns

By JIM ELLIOTT

W.Va. Sports Editor WHEELING - For the fourth time in its 40-year histo-

ry, the Wheeling News-Regis-

ter/Bill Van Horne OVAC

TUESDAY MAY 19, 2009

Соміся16 TV/ENTERTAINMENT

13



Photo by Jim Elliott

Doug Huff, middle, retired sports editor of The Intelligencer is flanked by Wheeling News-Register/Bill Van Horne Co-Coach of the Year winners Robert "Bubba" Kapral of St. John Central, left, and Mel Stephens of Wheeling Central.

Coach of the Year Award had two winners when it was announced Monday night at the annual OVAC Banquet of Champions at WesBanco Arena.

Bellaire St. John Central track and field coach Robert "Bubba" Kapral and Wheeling Central boys' basketball coach **OVAC Banquet of Champions**

Coach of Year Honor

Mel Stephens – both leaders of back-to-back state championship teams in their respective sports - shared the honor. The last time the OVAC had co-coaches of the year was 2007 when Oak of a lot of different people." Glen wrestling coach Larry Shaw and Steubenville football coach Reno Saccoccia shared it.

"You win it once, that's as good as it gets," said Kapral, last year's lone recipient. "To win it back to back. I never expected it."

Neither did Stephens, who viewed the award as much more of a team honor than an individual one.

"I haven't made a shot in a long time," he said. "Those guys go out and do all the hard work. My staff does a great job of scouting and getting them ready. It's an honor that I accept, but I accept it on behalf

Also nominated were St. John Central cross country coach Jeremy Midei, who most certainly had Kapral's support, a point Kapral made during his acceptance speech. Monroe Central girls' basketball coach Troy Baker, and Meadowbrook golf coach Mel Pesuit.

Please See COACH, Page 18

Finalists Named For The OVAC Coach of the Year

Five of the area's top three state championship teams and multimentors selected for annual accolade

By JIM ELLIOTT W.Va. Sports Editor

WHEELING - Some say winning isn't everything; it's the only thing. While that's not likely the mindset of the five finalists for the Wheeling News-Regis-ter/Bill Van Horne OVAC Coach of the Year Award, it's basically all they knew during the last 12 months.

In most cases, it's been much longer than that.

For Wheeling Central boys' basketball coach Mel Stephens, St. John Central cross country coach Jeremy Midei, St. John girls' track coach Bubba Kapral, Monroe Central girls' basketball coach Troy Baker, and Meadowbrook golf coach Mel Pesuit, the victories piled up at a near-record pace during the 2008-09 school year.

With more than 500 coaches in the OVAC, these guys are in the top 1 percent in their class. Included are the leaders of

ple sectional, district, and regional titlists. Every one of them guided at least one OVAC championship team during the school year, with Baker at the helm of two OVAC champions (also volleyball).

Mel Pesuit Meadowbrook Golf

Pesuit, who has led his teams to five OVAC titles in 16 seasons, is a three-time Ohio Division II Eastern District Coach of the Year. His Colts finished this season with a 17-6 dual match record and 119-47 overall record. Included in that was first-place finishes in the East Central



Mel Pesuit

Ohio League (ECOL) Tournament, the OVAC Class AAA Tournament, and the Ohio Division II District Tournament. They wound up in eighth place in their first state-tournament appearance.

During Pesuit's career, his teams have compiled a 235-183 dual match record and an overall record of 1,172-866.

See, Coaches, Page B3

Coach

(Continued from Page 13)

Kapral, a four-time finalist for the award, guided his girls' track team to its second consecutive Ohio Division III state track and field championship. The 2007 crown was shared with Gilmour Academy, Last year, they left no doubt, as they scored in a record 11 events and set a state scoring record with 69 points.

Early on, we didn't deal with being state cham-pions very well." Kapral said. "As it went on, the Steubenville Centrals and the Wheeling Parks, when we competed against them. they made us better. And then, boom, once we rolled around to May, that success from the previous year and the leadership of the Natalie Perzanowskis, Kylie Kidders, the Delmans and those people, said 'it's time

again.' We've been through the wars with those people and every meet - OVAC, regional, district, and state - they performed better and better.

A four-year run of domination like the St. John girls have experienced (back-toback state runner-up finishes, followed by back-toback titles) has left Kapral both humbled and honored since it began.

"Lost in the shuffle, I was happy the first year we were state runner-up." he said. "I thought that was as good as it gets. Then the state title, then the repeat. It's just unfathomable what the girls did and what the coaches did in Ohio. It's mindboggling to do it backto-back.

Stephens, who has twice been nominated - an honor in itself, he said -

similarly guided his Maroon Knights' boys to back-to-back state championships. The program has won six of the last eight West Virginia Class A boys' basketball titles, with Stephens taking over for Dave Wojcik after the first two were in the books.

"I have to give Coach Wojcik because he had the confidence in me to recommend me for the job when he left," Stephens said. "And I have to thank Dr. (Joseph) Viglietta (the school's principal) for acting on that."

Stephens, who has led the Maroon Knights to four consecutive OVAC boys' basketball championships, has a career record 124-37. He has overseen five sectional and regional championship teams in his six seasons as head coach.

COACHES

Continued from page B1

That includes two sectional championships, six district tourney appearances, including a district title.

He has coached four OVAC tournament medalists, 22 all-OVAC golfers, and one Eastern District Player of the Year. Thirteen Meadowbrook golfers have gone on to play collegiately under Pesuit.

Bubba Kapral St. John track and field

Kapral, a four-time finalist for this award and last year's recipient, guided his girls' track team to its second consecutive Ohio Division III state, track and field championship.

This time, it wasn't even close. The St. John girls scored in a record 11 events at the 2008 state tourney, won two gold medals (4X100 and 4X200) with the 4X200 relay team setting all-time state record (1:42.77).



Bubba Kapral

This continued a four-year run of dominance (back-to-back runner-up finishes, followed by back-to-back titles) for the Irish girls, who are perhaps the most dominant girls' track team in the history of the OVAC. To that end, Kapral's teams have won a league record eight consecutive OVAC track and field titles and 11 overall in Kapral's 21 seasons. He's a six-time Eastern District Coach of the Year the last six years.

Kapral is also the girls' basketball coach at St. John, where his teams have won more than 200 games and eight more OVAC crowns.

Mel Stephens

Wheeling Central boys' basketball Stephens, a two-time finalist for this award, is a couple of months removed from leading Wheeling Central to its sixth West Virginia Class A state championship in eight seasons, including fourth in six years under his guidance. Stephens ushered the Maroon Knights to a 23-5 record this season, and he has a career record 124-37, winning an astounding 77 percent of his games. He has overseen five sectional and regional championship teams in his six seasons.

Stephens' Maroon Knights also won a fourth consecutive OVAC title – three in Class AA and one in Class AAA. Prior to being named the head boys' basketball coach. Stephens was an assistant on Dave Wojcick's back-to-back 'state title winning teams.

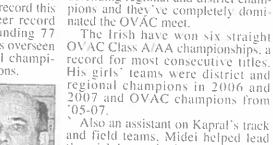
This season, he added the title of JV baseball coach to his name, along with his son, Chris, a former multi-sport standout at Wheeling Central.

Jeremy Midei St. John Cross Country

In his fifth season in charge of the St. John cross country program. Midei led his boys to their first Ohio Division III State Championship after years of knocking on the door. In the previous three seasons. Midei's runners finished no worse than seventh in the dots while his

in the state, while his girls' team finished sixth in 2007.

So dominant were the Irish boys,



"05-07. "Also an assistant on Kapral's track and field teams. Midei helped lead the girls' team's four-year run of back-to-back state runner-up finishes, followed by back-to-back state championships.

they were undefeated against Divi-

sion II and Division III competition.

with their only losses to three Divi-

defending regional and district cham-

His boys' teams are four-time

sion Eschools.

All told, Midei has coached more than 50 individual OVAC champions in track.

Troy Baker

Monroe Central girls' basketball

Baker led his girls' basketball team to a second consecutive OVAC Class AA title, a Pioneer Valley Conference title, and Ohio Division III sectional and district titles in 2008. The Seminoles, led by senior stars Aleisha Guiler and Karlie Davie mont

Troy Baker

Karlie Davis, went 21-4, losing to powerful Oak Hill in the school's first appearance in a regional tournament.

Baker has also led the Seminoles' wildly successful volleyball team to four consecutive OVAC Class AA titles. The Seminoles' advanced to district tournament this season.



Mel

Stephens

Jeremy Midei