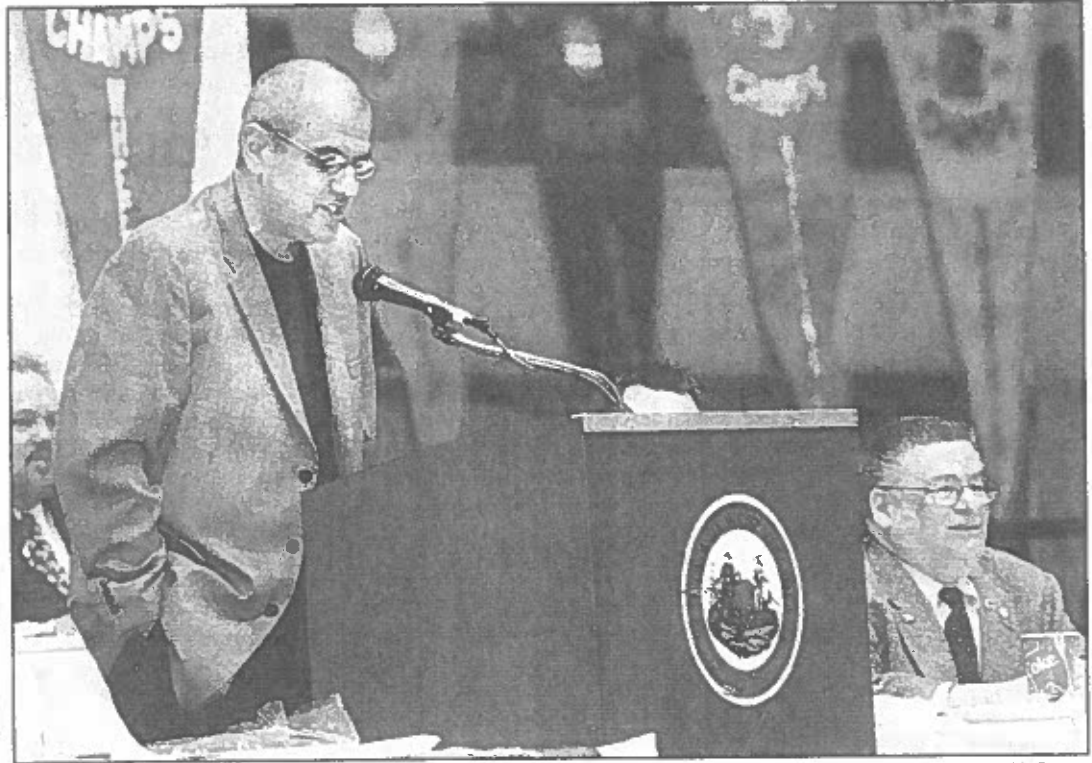


OVAC Coach of the Year



T-L Photo

GIVING his acceptance speech at the annual OVAC Banquet of Champions Monday evening at WesBanco Arena is Bellaire head basketball coach Gene Ammirante who received the OVAC Coach of the Year Award after guiding the Big Reds to the Division III state tournament this past winter.

OVAC Coach of the Year



Photo by Scott McCloskey

Bellaire High School boys' basketball coach Gene Ammirante holds the plaque awarded to him after he received the OVAC Wheeling News-Register Bill Van Horne Coach of the Year award at the Banquet of Champions Monday at WesBanco Arena. Standing with Coach Ammirante are, from left, daughter Lindsey, son Jerry, wife Pam, and Wheeling Newspapers executive sports editor Nick Bedway, who presented the award.

Shenandoah's Wesson among finalists for OVAC 'Coach of the Year' award

Banquet of Champions slated Monday in Wheeling

JEFF HARRISON
THE DAILY JEFFERSONIAN

WHEELING, W.Va. — The Ohio Valley Athletic Conference will put a bow on the 2003-04 school year Monday evening at the annual Banquet of Champions at WesBanco Arena.

Among the highlights of the evening will be the presentation of the OVAC "Coach of the Year" award, sponsored by the Wheeling News-Register, and one of the local area's coaches is among the finalists.

Shenandoah High's Dan Wesson was selected as a finalist for the award along with two coaches each from Bellaire and Oak Glen. Bellaire's boys' basketball coach Gene Ammirante and football coach John Magistro, along with Oak Glen boys' basketball coach Dave Smith and wrestling coach Larry Shaw join Wesson as finalists.

Wesson guided the Zeps to their first-ever undefeated regular season and a third consecutive trip to the OHSAA Division V state playoffs. Shenandoah advanced to the Region 19 finals, defeating Minford (47-6) and Wheelersburg (28-14) before falling to Amanda-Clearcreek (13-12).

Wesson's also pocketed the OVAC Class 2-A championship and the Pioneer Valley Conference crown.

The 2003 Eastern District Division V "Coach of the Year",



Past OVAC 'Coach of the Year' winners

1969 - Frank Baxter, Bridgeport (boys' basketball); 1970 - Henry Lasasz, Warren Consolidated (boys' basketball); 1971 - Chuck Watt, Steubenville (boys' basketball); 1972 - Tom Korab, Steubenville Catholic Central (football); 1973 - Lou Nocida, Sistersville (football); 1974-79 - none selected; 1980 - Jim Thomas, Wheeling Central (football); 1981 - John Stanko, Bishop Donahue (boys' basketball); 1982 - Mel Coleman, Wintersville (boys' basketball); 1983 - George 'Skip' Prosser, Wheeling Central (boys' basketball); 1984 - Mark Huffman, Skyvue (boys' basketball); 1985 - Reno Saccoccia, Steubenville (football); 1986 - Paul 'Bud' Billiard, Brooke (football); 1987 - George Strager, St. Clairsville (football); 1988 - David LaMotte, Bridgeport (wrestling); 1989 - Reno Saccoccia, Steubenville (football); 1990 - Chuck Watt, Steubenville (boys' basketball); 1991 - Paul 'Bud' Billiard, Brooke (football); 1992 - Jim Potts, Cameron (wrestling) and Gene Ford, Cambridge (boys' basketball); 1993 - Dave Kovalick, Barnesville (football); 1994 - Fred Heatherington, Steubenville (baseball); 1995 - Sam Andy, Wheeling Park (boys' basketball); 1996 - John Magistro, Bellaire (football); 1997 - Mike Linsky, John Marshall (football); 1998 - Dee Davis, Wheeling Park (girls' basketball); 1999 - Wayne Neely, Weir (football); 2000 - Larry Shaw, Oak Glen (wrestling); 2001 - Terry Edwards, Wheeling Central (baseball); 2002 - Craig Schneid, Magnolia (track); 2003 - Jim Thomas, Wheeling Central (football).

Wesson sports a seven-year record of 53-24 at Shenandoah.

Ammirante guided Bellaire's basketball team to its first-ever OHSAA State Tournament appearance in Division III as well as the OVAC Class 3-A championship; Magistro led the Big Reds' football team to the OHSAA Division IV state semifinals and the OVAC Class 3-A title; Smith led Oak Glen's boys' basketball team to an undefeated regular season and the West Virginia Class 2-A state tournament; and Shaw guided Oak Glen to the West Virginia Class 2-A and OVAC overall wrestling titles.

All of the conference's team champions will be honored, including:

Boys' basketball - Frontier (1-A); Fort Frye (2-A); Oak Glen (3-A); Beaver Local (4-A).

Girls' basketball - Beallsville (1-A); River (2-A); Magnolia (3-A); Wheeling Park (4-A).

Cheerleading - Paden City (1-A); Wheeling Central (2-A); St. Clairsville (3-A); Brooke (4-A).

Boys' cross country - St. John Central (1-A/2-A); St. Clairsville (3-A); Buckeye Local (4-A)

A); Buckeye Local (4-A).

Golf - Linsly (1-A); River (2-A); Meadowbrook (3-A); Wheeling Park (4-A).

Boys' soccer - Linsly (D-I); St. Clairsville (D-II); Steubenville Catholic (D-III).

Girls' soccer - Wheeling Park (D-I); John Marshall (D-II); Weirton Madonna (D-III).

Softball - St. John Central (1-A); Monroe Central (2-A); Magnolia (3-A); Wheeling Park (4-A).

Boys' swimming - Brooke (big school); Linsly (small school).

Girls' swimming - Brooke (big school); Barnesville (small school).

Boys' tennis - Linsly (overall).
Girls' tennis - Wheeling Park (overall).

Boys' track - Linsly (1-A); Wheeling Central (2-A); Bellaire (3-A); Wheeling Park (4-A).

Girls' track - St. John Central (1-A); Barnesville (2-A); Bellaire (3-A); Weir (4-A).

Volleyball - Frontier (1-A); Wellsville (2-A); St. Clairsville (3-A); East Liverpool (4-A).

Wrestling - Shadyside (1-A); Caldwell (2-A); Oak Glen (3-A); Buckeye Local (4-A).

Baseball - Weirton Madonna (1-A); Steubenville Catholic (2-A); Meadowbrook (3-A); Buckeye

