

More Than 1,200 Expected To Attend Kroger-OVAC Banquet Of Champions

A record crowd in excess of 1,200 people is expected to attend the Kroger Ohio Valley Athletic Conference "Banquet of Champions" this Wednesday night at the Wheeling Civic Center.

Archie Griffin, the only two-time winner of the Heisman Trophy and currently an assistant athletic director at his alma mater, Ohio State University, will be the main speaker at the dinner, which begins at 6:30 p.m.

Over 900 high school athletes and their coaches, who won team championships during the 1987-88 school year, will be honored at the gathering. Members of the championship teams have been invited as guests and cost of their dinners is being financed by the OVAC Foundation and the Kroger Company.

In addition to the championship pennants, several individual scholarship and special awards will be presented during the evening. Participants in the scholarship program include Kroger's, McDonald's, Pepsi-Cola and Wheeling National Bank, and the OVAC Baseball Umpires and Football Officials. There are also two wrestling scholarships—The Daniel

M. Burke and George Kovalick Memorial Scholarships.

Other awards to be given include the Calvin Giffin Memorial Track Service Award; the Dave Bierkorte Wrestling Award and four basketball sportsmanship awards to be presented by the Ohio Valley Board of Approved Basketball Officials.

The Bierkorte award, given annually to the outstanding wrestler in the OVAC tournament, goes this year to Bridgeport's Rick Burlenski, undefeated Ohio state champion at 189 pounds.

Sportsmanship awards in basketball go to Sistersville, coached by Fred King, Class A; Buckeye Trail, coached by Terry Leggett, Class AA; Magnolia, coached by Mark Blair, Class AAA, and Cambridge, coached by Gene Ford, Class AAAA.

One of the evening's highlights will be the presentation of the News-Register's "OVAC Coach of the Year" Award.

Master of ceremonies for the dinner will be Dave Stuckey of Josten's, while musical entertainment will be provided by Ms. Suzanne Kennedy, 1987 Stone & Thomas Queen of Queens Pageant winner at

the OVAC's annual charity all-star football game. Kennedy is a graduate of St. Clairsville High School.

Additional tickets, priced at \$10 each, can be obtained by calling Banquet Chairman Jerry Vinci at 1-614-859-6307 after 4 p.m.; Sam Mumley, OVAC executive secretary, at 695-5168 or Rudy Mumley at 277-2683. Tables for eight can also be

reserved for the banquet by calling in advance. No tickets will be sold at the door.

Following is a list team champions for the 1987-88 school year (Note: the list does not include the OVAC's four baseball divisional winners that, weather permitting, were to be decided Saturday at Vaccaro Field in Steubenville):

FOOTBALL—Brooke, Coach Paul Billiard, Class AAAA; Linsly, Coach Terry Depew, Class AAA; Tyler, Coach John Stender, Class AA; Weirton Madonna, Coach Jim Paul, Class A.

BOYS' BASKETBALL—Steubenville, Coach Chuck Watt, Class AAAA; Bellaire, Coach Gene Ammirante, Class AAA; Wellsville, Coach Quin Carter, Class AA; Shadyside, Coach John Stanko, Class A.

W. VA. GIRLS' BASKETBALL—Brooke, Coach Dick Pannett, Class AAAA-AAA; Weirton Madonna, Coach Carl Hamill, Class AA-A.

OHIO GIRLS' BASKETBALL—Steubenville Catholic Central, Coach John Nese, Class AAA; River, Coach Tom Tisher, Class AA; Buckeye West, Coach Frank Savarese, Class A.

DUAL MEET WRESTLING—Steubenville, Coach John Craig, Class AAAA; Jefferson Union, Coach Dave LeBrun, Class AAA; Cadiz, Coach John Stephenson, Class AA; Bealsville, Coach Sam Schumacher, Class A.

BOYS' TRACK AND FIELD—Wheeling Park, Coach Dick Del, Class AAAA; Martins Ferry, Coach Gordon Downie, Class AAA; Stanton, Coach Mark Hoobler, Class AA; Paden City, Coach John Holliday, Class A.

GIRLS' TRACK AND FIELD—John Marshall, Coach John Snively, and Steubenville, Coach Tom Mitchell, tied for title in Class AAAA; Martins Ferry, Coach Gordon Downie, Class AAA; Stanton, Coach Karen Lundquist, Class A.

GIRLS' SOFTBALL—John Marshall, Coach Pancho Flores, Class AAA; Steubenville Catholic Central, Coach Tom Antinone, Class AA; Buckeye West, Coach Barry Closser, Class A.

OHIO BOYS' TENNIS—Wintersville, Coach Cecil Nicola.

W. VA. BOYS' TENNIS—Oak Glen, Coach Jack McDevitt.

OVERALL GIRLS' TENNIS—Wheeling Central, Coach Cathy Bishop.

GOLF—Cambridge, Coach Dan Watkins, Class AAAA; St. Clairsville, Coach Richard "Lefty" Hall, Class AAA; Cadiz, Coach Carl Haught, Class AA; Buckeye West, Coach Barry Closser, Class A.

BOYS' CROSS-COUNTRY—Oak Glen, Coach Jules Adam, Class AAAA; Magnolia, Coach Wayne Feity, Class AAA; Skyvue, Coach Keith Coss, Class A-AA.

GIRLS' CROSS-COUNTRY—Brooke, Coach Jim Rodgers.

OHIO GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL—East Liverpool, Coach Bob Shansky, Class AAA; Buckeye, Trall, Coach Rod Johnson, Class AA; Skyvue, Coach Jeanette Thompson, Class A.

W. VA. GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL—John Marshall, Coach Bill Stoehr, Class AAAA-AAA; Wheeling Central, Coach Floyd Deaton, Class AAA-AA.

Host of worthy candidates for OVAC 'Coach of Year'

By **RICH GIBSON**
Times Leader Sports Writer

When the annual OVAC Banquet of Champions unfolds Wednesday night at the Wheeling Civic Center, among the highlights will be the presentation of the annual "Coach of the Year" award.

As usual, several area coaches have distinguished themselves by producing exceptional efforts in their respective fields.

The award, presented by veteran Ohio Valley sportswriter Bill Van Horne, is voted upon by members of Ohio Valley sports media.

Following are brief characterizations of this year's candidates, who were nominated based on their achievements during the 1987-88 school year:

FOOTBALL

RENO SACCOCCIA, Steubenville Big Red — A perennial nominee, whose '87 gridders fell to Akron Buchtel in the Division II state championship game.

Saccoccia has posted a five-year record of 56-7 which includes a state title in 1984. Was named Dapper Dan "Man of the Year" in 1985.

PAUL BILLIARD, Brooke — Like Saccoccia, annually produces excellent results at the Wellsburg-based school.

Last fall, his Bruins capped a second Mountain State crown in three seasons by capturing 13 consecutive games. Billiard's Brooke gridders have gained post-season berths eight times in past nine years.

TERRY DEPEW, Linsly — His Cadets have 23-game winning streak dating back to 1985 season. May have been somewhat overlooked due to the fact Linsly is not eligible for post-season playoffs.

JIM PAUL, Weirton Madonna — Guided the Blue Dons to 13 consecutive wins and the W. Va. Class A championship last fall. In addition, won the OVAC Class A championship.

JOHN STENDER, Tyler County — Has a long-running success story at the Middlebourne-based school. Produced a "storybook" scenario last fall by compiling an unbeaten regular season before suffering an 8-6 playoff loss to Matewan. His 1983 Raider combine was the W. Va. 'A' state champion.

JOHN KUCZYKOWSKI, Jefferson Union — Led the Yellow Jackets to an 8-2 regular season mark and gained first-ever playoff berth before being sidetracked by eventual Division IV state champ Columbus Academy. Recently was named head grid coach at Wintersville.

CROSS COUNTRY

WAYNE FETTY, Magnolia — A multi-successful coach in a sport which receives miniscule press coverage. Has amassed Mountain

State championships with both Blue Eagle boys' and girls' harr squads.

BASKETBALL

GENE FORD — Captured the hearts of Guernsey County seat everywhere by directing Bobcats to Buckeye State court carnival was the 'Cats' first state tourney berth in 70 years.

BOB BURTON, Paden City — One of West Virginia's most prol cage wizards, whose accomplishments include three straight st tournament teams and a 1987 state title. Has 25-year record of 3 215.

DAVE REITTER, Brooke — After building Bruins' 25-victory st championship campaign in 1987, returned to produce 19 wins this f season despite major rebuilding task.

JOHN STANKO, Shadyside — Personable Tiger mentor who l Bengals to district tourney. His club captured 19 victories and f gained OVAC 1-A championship banner.

DICK POTTS, River — The Ohio Valley's all-time winningest co and favorite son of Monroe County, took River to a first-ever regit berth to the Convocation Center in Athens. Has compiled an ama: 567 career coaching wins.

CHUCK WATT, Steubenville Big Red — Another near-annual t tender, whose '87-88 cagers captured the OVAC 4-A crown, wll was Watt's seventh OVAC banner. Owns a 21-year mark of 316-133

VIC WHITING, Meadowbrook — Only girls' hoop coach to nominated this year. Took Lady Colts to Division II state title game fore bowing to Akron Hoban in a thriller. In his eight seasons at Byesville-based school, Whiting has compiled an outstanding 151 record.

WRESTLING

JOHN STEPHENSON, Cadiz — Quite possibly the sentim choice among voters following his resignation last winter. mastermind of matmen won 11 OVAC dual meet titles in 12 yr. Captured the Ohio state crown in 1987 and finished fifth in Divisii this year. His '88 troops were Class AA champs in giant O tourney where they finished just three and a half points behind winning East Liverpool.

NICK TROMBETTA, East Liverpool — Has established up-river ters as OVAC powers, having produced AAAA banners twice ir three years.

DAVE LAMOTTE, Bridgeport — Re-established Bulldogs' s mat program by producing back-to-back exceptional campaigns minated by Ohio Division III championship in 1988. Was runner Cadiz for state crown in '87.

JOHN CRAIG, Steubenville — Tutored Big Red wrestlers to Div II runnerup laurels in 1988, a season that cluded an OVAC dual title.

BASEBALL

TERRY EDWARDS, Wheeling Central — Overcame adversity 2-22 season a year ago to manufacture a valley-best 14-gam streak this spring en route to the OVAC 2-A banner.

DANNY BUTTS, St. John Central — The "miracle man" of C sey St. who guided a predominantly young rebounding Irish team victories and the OVAC 1-A title.



THE OVAC "Banquet of Champions" was held under the sponsorship of The Kroger Co. for the first time Wednesday night at the Wheeling Civic Center and drew an estimated audience of about 1,000 athletes, coaches, parents and guests. Guest speaker was two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin, now assistant athletic director at his

alma mater, Ohio State University. He's flanked from left, Jerry Williams, Ohio Valley Zone Manager, and Bob Shafer, vice-president of the Columbus Market District of Kroger; James Wyatt, of Tyler County School district, the OVAC's incoming president; and Sam A. Mumley Sr. of St. Clairsville, executive secretary of the OVAC.

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