

GETTING OFF THE 'SCHNEID'



Photo by Alex Kozlowski

Flanked by his wife Renee, Magnolia track coach Craig Schneid shows off his News-Register/Bill Van Horne-Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Coach of the Year award, which he was presented with Monday at the 17th Annual OVAC Banquet of Champions at the Wheeling Civic Center.

DURING CORRESPONDENCE with various media outlets the past week, it seems evident the OVAC needs to re-define its role naming the annual Coach of the Year, presented each spring at the conference's Banquet of Champions. For many years, both print and electronic media throughout the valley offered both input and votes. That process was unceremoniously eliminated a year ago without formal explanation from the OVAC. If the by-state conference elects to retain its title associated with the honor, a policy re-assessment is in order.

Five Finalists Revealed for OVAC Coach

Presentation of the News-Register/Bill Van Home-Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Coach of the Year Award will highlight Monday night's 17th annual OVAC Banquet of Champions at the Wheeling Civic Center.

Until recently, the award had been dominated by football and boys basketball coaches. But in the past few years mentors devoted to sports such as wrestling, baseball and girls' basketball have been recognized for their standout work and the stellar performances of their athletes.

Just last year the winner was Terry Edwards, who coached Wheeling Central to back-to-back state baseball titles (1999 and 2000). Edwards also was recognized for his efforts as an assistant coach as the Maroon Knights won the 2000 state championship in football and was a runner-up last fall.

Two years ago, the recipient was Larry Shaw, coach of Oak Glen High School's wrestling team which has dominated the W.Va. Class AA ranks for nearly a decade.

It wasn't long ago that Dee Davis was selected after coaching Wheeling Park's girls to a W.Va. AAA state basketball championship.

The late Bill Van Home, for whom this award was named, would have been more than pleased with these recipients. Van Home was a true champion of all sports in the Ohio Valley and devoted much of his time to covering wrestling and track on both the high school and area collegiate level during his career.

One thing for sure is that the selection process has gotten more difficult the past decade or so. This is partly because of the increased number of sports and teams representing the OVAC, but also mainly due to the steady stream of Ohio and West Virginia championship teams or near state titles efforts turned in each year by conference schools.

When tomorrow's dinner unfolds beginning at 6:30 p.m., seated at one table along with their spouses will be the five OVAC head coaches chosen as this year's finalists for the Van Home award.

Four of them will receive plaques signifying they were this year's finalists, while one will be honored as the coach of the year.

This year's "Fab Five" includes: David "Ty" Fleming, head football coach and Jim Miller, girls' basketball coach at Shadyside High School; Craig Schneid, head boys' track coach at Magnolia High School in New Martinsville; Dave Wojcik, boys' basketball coach at Wheeling Central Catholic High School; and Russ Hutchins, girls' soccer coach at Wheeling Park High School.

Because the OVAC banquet is held prior to the end of the spring sports season, coaches accomplishments in baseball, softball, tennis, and track and field from last May receive consideration for this year's award.

For Fleming, this is his second straight year as a finalist and with good reason. Two years ago, "Ty" directed the Tigers into the regional finals of the Ohio Division VI playoffs. Last fall Shadyside came ever so close to earning a berth in the state title game. After a 9-1 record season, the Tigers added three more victories in advancing to the Ohio semifinals before dropping a tough decision to Mogadore.

Shadyside's terrific sports year continued during the winter months when Miller coached the girls' basketball squad to a remarkable 25-3 season that saw the Lady Tigers reach the Division IV state finals for the first time in school history. Their dream campaign finally ended with a loss to Delphos St. John, a team that had eliminated previously-undefeated Mansfield St. Peter's during the semifinals.

Schneid's track teams at Magnolia High have been perennial state powers and last spring was no exception as the Blue Eagle boys won yet another Class AA-A track and field championship.

Wojcik, who played on a W.Va. state title-winning basketball team at Wheeling Central, now also has coached a title-winning club. In his first season as the head coach at his alma mater, Wojcik's Maroon Knights hit the jackpot. Central capped off a 21-6 record season with an incredible 65-61 double-overtime win over Parkersburg Catholic in the single-A state final played at the Charleston Civic Center Coliseum.

The win in the championship game came just two days after Central had edged Williamson 62-60 in the state quarterfinals.

Hutchins stepped in and guided the Lady Patriot girls to West Virginia Class AAA honors in soccer last fall.

It was the school's fourth state title in a row with three different head coaches at the helm. Anthony James coached Park's 1998 and 1999 title-winners, while Carrie Plute Hanna was in charge during the 2000 season.

Numerous other area coaches came under consideration as finalists this season. It was a tough indeed to reduce the list to just five coaches this time around.

For instance Jay Circosta had one of his youngest teams ever at Monroe Central last fall and he led the Seminoles to an 11-3 season that ended

with a loss to powerful Bedford St. the Ohio Division V football playoff.

Jim Thomas, a finalist in 2000, was the OVAC Coach of the Year, following a title-winning year with an 11-3 record. He lost to Moorefield in the Class A final at Wheeling Island Stadium.

Shaw kept things going at Oak Glen, winning a sixth straight West Virginia wrestling championship.

Magnolia's football team, coached by Dan Wesson, went 9-3, losing out to eventual state champion Poca in the W.Va. Class AA quarterfinals. Shenandoah, coached by Dan Wesson, eliminated OVAC rival Barnesville in the first round of the Division V football playoffs before bowing out against Smithville, 36-34. Eric Meek's Wellsville Tigers (7-5) surprised Newark Catholic in the first round but was outscored by Shadyside, 41-35, in a quarterfinal thriller at Harding Stadium in Steubenville.

Kim Appolloni coached Marti's basketball team to the school's first-ever national appearance. Meanwhile, Unicoi was coached by Mike Podlasiak, reacting in the final.

Tyler Consolidated, coached by Dan Wesson, reached the W.Va. Class AA boys' state final and lost to eventual state champion East.

In girls' basketball, Mike Delfino coached the Blue Madonna to the W.Va. Class A state title. The Blue Dons lost to state champion Parkersburg in the quarterfinals. John Webber's Oak Glen girls' basketball team won the W.Va. AA quarterfinals. Davis reached the state final following an upset of Parkersburg in the regional finals. South had two first place finishes in its lineup.

Wheeling Park's boys' soccer team, coached by Dan Wesson, won a state title last fall.

Certainly, there wasn't room in the list all of the coaches who may have been left out of the year consideration. My apologies to those who may have been left out.

There can only be one winner of the Year Award on Monday night. This list tells you something about the coaches we have in this area.

The OVAC is fortunate to have head coaches and assistants who d



Named for OVAC Coach of the Year Award

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Track teams at Magnolia High have late powers and last spring was no Blue Eagle boys won yet another track and field championship.

played on a W.Va. state title-winning team at Wheeling Central, now also a winning club. In his first season at his alma mater, Wojcik's team hit the jackpot. Central capped off its season with an incredible 65-61 double over Parkersburg Catholic in the final played at the Charleston Civic

the championship game came just as Central had edged Williamson 62-41 in the quarterfinals.

Wojcik led in and guided the Lady Patriot to Virginia Class AAA honors in soccer

Wojcik's fourth state title in a row with head coaches at the helm. Anthony Wojcik's 1998 and 1999 title-winning Plute Hanna was in charge during the season.

Other area coaches came under consideration this season. It was a tough choice to get the list to just five coaches this year.

Jay Circosta had one of his best years at Monroe Central last fall and led his team to an 11-3 season that ended

with a loss to powerful Bedford St. Peter Chanel in the Ohio Division V football playoff semifinals.

Jim Thomas, a finalist in 2000 and a past OVAC Coach of the Year, followed up the state title-winning year with an 11-3 record and a 13-0 record to Moorefield in the Class A finals last December at Wheeling Island Stadium.

Shaw kept things going at Oak Glen, which won a sixth straight West Virginia Class AA-A wrestling championship.

Magnolia's football team, coached by Mark Barton, went 9-3, losing out to eventual state champion Poca in the W.Va. Class AA quarterfinals. Shenandoah, coached by Dan Wesson, eliminated OVAC rival Barnesville in the first round of the Division V football playoffs before bowing out against Smithville, 36-34. Eric Meek's Wellsville Tigers (7-5) surprised Newark Catholic in the first round but was outscored by Shadyside, 41-35, in a quarterfinal thriller at Harding Stadium in Steubenville.

Kim Appolloni coached Martins Ferry's girls' basketball team to the school's first-ever regional semifinal appearance. Meanwhile, Union Local's boys, coached by Mike Podlasiak, reached the district final.

Tyler Consolidated, coached by Rick Leach, reached the W.Va. Class AA boys' state tournament and lost to eventual state champion Wyoming East.

In girls' basketball, Mike DelRe took Weirton Madonna to the W.Va. Class A semifinals where the Blue Dons lost to state champion Mercer Christian; John Webber's Oak Glen girls' advanced to the W.Va. AA quarterfinals. Davis brought Wheeling Park back to the Class AAA state tournament following an upset of Parkersburg South in the regional finals. South had two first-team all-stars in its lineup.

Wheeling Park's boys' soccer team, coached by Mario Julian, also won a state championship last fall.

Certainly, there wasn't room in this column to list all of the coaches who may have merited coach of the year consideration. My apologies to anyone who may have been left out.

There can only be one winner of the Coach of the Year Award on Monday night, but the above list tells you something about the caliber of coaches we have in this area.

The OVAC is fortunate to have such quality head coaches and assistants who devote their time

and knowledge to teaching the games on the field and in the gymnasiums along with the game of life to so many maturing youngsters.

Each and every one of them deserves their own little piece of that coach of the year trophy.

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Wheeling resident Bernie Galiffa, a former standout quarterback at West Virginia University, has been selected for a most deserving honor.

Galiffa, already a member of the Mountaineers' all-time football team, will be inducted into the Mid-Mon Valley All Sports Hall of Fame on Friday, June 28.

The awards ceremony begins at 6 p.m. at Gallagher Hall on the campus of the California University of Pennsylvania.

Galiffa is a graduate of Donora (Pa.) High School, where he starred in both football and basketball for the Dragons. He quarterbacked Donora to an 8-0-1 record during his senior season. He also starred on the basketball

team which lost only to Laurel Highlands in the WPIAL Class AAA championship game played at what was then called Pittsburgh's Civic Arena.

While at WVU, Galiffa set season records in 1972 when he completed 164 of 334 passes for 2,345 yards and 17 touchdowns. During his career, Bernie threw for 4,294 yards and 35 TDs.

He will be one of seven former Mon Valley greats to be enshrined next month. Some other familiar names on the list include former Ohio State defensive tackle Bill Urbanik, who played on Woody Hayes' 1968 national championship team; Pete Rostosky, an offensive lineman for five years with the Pittsburgh Steelers; Joe Rudolph, ex-Wisconsin, Philadelphia Eagles and San Francisco 49ers line standout; Fred Mazurek, who quarterbacked the University of Pittsburgh to a 9-1 record in 1963, the only loss coming against a Navy team quarterbacked by Roger Staubach; and James Simms, a football and track great at Pitt during the 1930's.

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Condolences are extended to the families of James W. Galloway and James M. Janetski, who passed away his past week.

Galloway's grandson is Joey Galloway, former Bellaire and Ohio State great who now plays wide-receiver for the Dallas Cowboys. Janetski's sister is Barbara Janetski, long-time employee of the Wheeling Recreation Department.

Nick Bedway can be reached via e-mail at: Bedway@news-register.net

Nick's Notebook



By NICK BEDWAY



OVAC Banquet May 13

The annual OVAC Banquet of Champions will be held Monday, May 13 at the Wheeling Civic Center in downtown Wheeling.

Doors open at 5:30 while the banquet will commence at 6:30.

Pennants will be awarded to championship teams in all sports.

In addition, some \$15,000 in scholarships will be presented. They include Kroger, OVAC Foundation (4), Pepsi-Cola, George Kovalick Memorial, Henry Lasaz Basketball (2), Richard Potts Basketball (2), Anthony Bodkin Co. Soccer, Douglas Pilney Memorial, OVAC Cheerleader (2), Daniel M. Burke, Dead Eye Morris Wrestling, Wheeling National Bank, Ohio Valley Football Officials, Samuel A. Mumley Memorial, OVAC Swimming and Wesbanco (2).

Special Awards include the Dave Bierkorte, Cal Giffin Memorial Track Service Award and the News Register Bill Van Horne OVAC Coach of the Year Award.

Major sponsors for the banquet are the OVAC Foundation, Wendy's, Pepsi and Kroger.

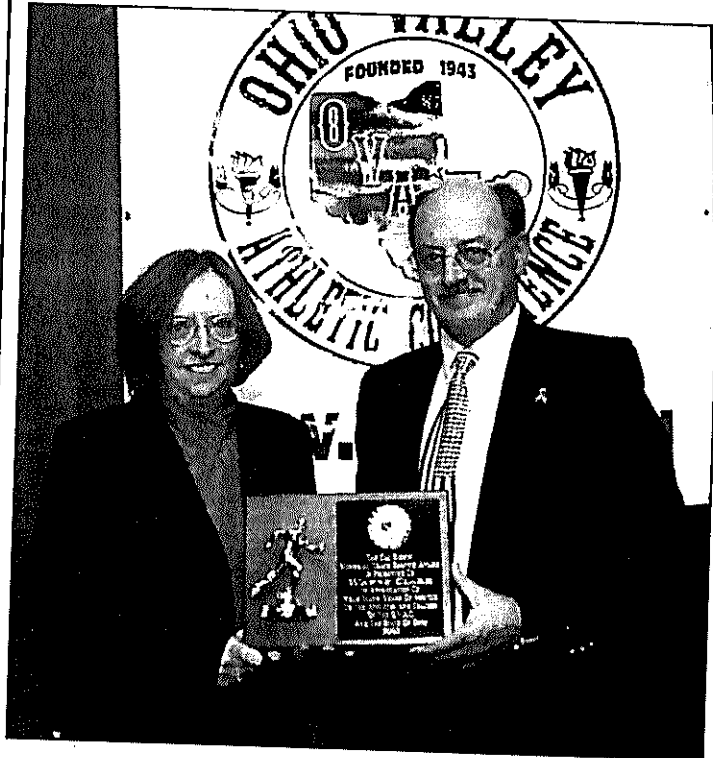
Pre-dinner music will be presented by the Buckeye Local Jazz Band, under the direction of Bill Stephens. Wheeling Central's Courtney Basich will sing the national anthem.

Tickets are \$13 and must be secured in advance.

No tickets will be sold at the door.

Anyone wanting to purchase tickets should call: Ron White at 740-859-2357 from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. or at 304-277-3599 after 3:30 p.m.

Giffin Award



T-L Photo/MICHAEL HARVILLA

WAYNE CLARK receives the Cal Giffin Memorial Track Service Award from OVAC track official Donna Joseph during the OVAC Banquet of Champions.