



Ohio High School Basketball Coaches Association Newsletter

February 2026

oh.nhsbca.org

Volume 12 Issue 6

Upcoming Events

OHSBCA Awards

Academic All-Ohio
Academic Teams
Boys Assistant COY
Boys Coach of Year
Boys Player of Year
Coaches Scholarship
Girls Assistant COY
Girls Coach of Year
Girls Player of Year
2FG/ 3FG / FT Awards
Scholarship Society
Deadline March 1st

OHSAA Girls State Finals

Univ. of Dayton Arena
March 12th - 14th

OHSAA Boys State Finals

Univ. of Dayton Arena
March 19th - 22nd

North-South Game

Olentangy Liberty HS
April 24th

OHSBCA Hall of Fame

Columbus Marriott OSU
April 25th

OHSBCA Coaches Clinic

St. Charles Preparatory School
September 20th & 21st



OHSBCA ANNOUNCES HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES 2025

The Ohio High School Basketball Coaches Association (OHSBCA) is proud to announce the coaches and date for the Hall of Fame Class for 2026. This year, the association is inducting four coaches and one honorary member into the Hall of Fame. The four high school coaches and OHSAA Commissioner being inducted are Dave Close of Stow Munroe Falls, Ed Calo of Westerville South, Jim Rucki of Findlay, Tim Gabbard of Waynesville and honorary member Jerry Snodgrass of Former Commissioner of the OHSAA.

The Induction Ceremony for the Thirty-Sixth Class will be at the Columbus Marriott University Area at 3100 Olentangy River Road in Columbus, Ohio on Saturday, April 25, 2026 at 5:30 PM.

Tickets may be obtained by Calling Hall of Fame Director Paul Wayne at 419-261-2547 or by email at wayno1413@aol.com.

DAVE CLOSE



Dave Close grew up among heroes in his own home. Dave's family moved to Stow when he was five years old.

After high school, Dave competed in basketball and track at Taylor University (IN). Upon graduating in 1980 with a

Math/Education degree, Dave remained at Taylor to coach, serving two years under Hall of Fame Coach Paul Patterson. Close then accepted a two-year position at Kent State under Jim McDonald while earning a Master's Degree in Sports Psychology. After Kent, Dave served a year as an assistant to Biff Lloyd at Maple Heights High School. Close credits these three coaches, Patterson, McDonald and Lloyd, for giving him a solid foundation in coaching. In 1985, Close accepted his first head coaching job at Painesville Riverside, serving for three years. In 1988, Close became the head coach at his alma mater, Stow-Munroe Falls High School, where he recently retired after 37 years.

Close's head coaching record of 667-274 ranks 1st in Summit County history and 11th in Ohio history. His teams won 15 league, 28 sectional, 7 district and 2 regional titles. Close's teams had nine 20-win seasons, a 20-0 regular season, a three-season regular season record of 57-3, and 18 consecutive seasons winning at least 14 of 20 regular season games. Stow reached the Final 4 twice (1990, 1993) and the Elite 8 five times. Stow won Ohio AP Poll championships in 1993 and 1994 and finished 2nd in 1992 and 3rd in 2023. Stow finished 1st in Ohio in the final Martin RPI Poll in 2023. Stow was ranked nationally twice, reaching 10th in 1993 and 5th in 1994 in the USA Today National Rankings. Dave was fortunate to coach 36 players who earned All-Ohio honors.

Close's Stow teams sought great competition, having played against four teams ranked 1st in the country, a team ranked 2nd nationally, 15 state champions from five states and more than 15 future NBA players.

In his career, Close garnered 39 Coach of the Year honors including five Ohio Coach of the Year awards: the 1993 AP Award, the 1993 and 1994 Coaches Poll Award, the 2023 OHSBCA Award, and the 2022 NFHS Award. Close's all-star game coaching was highlighted by the 1994 NHSCA National East-West All-Star game in Atlanta, the 1995 OHSBCA North-South game and the 2019 Ohio-Kentucky All-Star Game. Close was recently awarded the John Wooden Legacy Award by the NHSBCA and OHSBCA. The OHSBCA had previously honored Dave with both the 2018 Paul Walker and 2020 Bob Arnzen Awards. Close was active in numerous coaching associations. In the late 1980s, Dave was one of the founders of the Greater Akron Basketball Coaches Association and twice served as its president. He was inducted into the GABCA Hall of Fame in 2024. Close currently serves as a mentor in the OHSBCA mentorship program.

ED CALO



Ed Calo, is the son of Vincent and Rose Marie Calo and is a 1975 graduate of Westerville High School. He continued his education at Slippery Rock University, where he earned 3 varsity letters for the Rock basketball program and captained his senior season. He earned his Bachelor's degree from Slippery Rock and further his education by obtaining a Master's degree from Ashland University in 1990.

With a passion for coaching, Ed began his career as an Assistant Coach at various high schools before being appointed the Head Basketball Coach at Westerville

OHSBCA Directory

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South for the 1987-88 season. His impressive 38 year career tenure with the Wildcats saw him accumulate 575 wins, leading his teams to 15 league, 7 district, 2 regional, and a state championship. His teams have been invited to the prestigious City of Psalms tournament and The Burger King Classic, playing against multiple future NBA players.

Ed's coaching prowess has been recognized with numerous accolades over the years. He was selected to coach the Ohio-Kentucky game in 2011 and the North South game in 2012. He has been named OCC Coach of the year 15 times, District 10 Coach of the year in 1990, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2022 and AP coach of the year in Division 1 in 1996 and 2015. He was also honored by USA Today as the Ohio State Coach of the year in 2015 and 2016 as well as receiving the same honor by OHSBCA. In 2023 the National Federation of High School Coaches Association named him Ohio Coach of the year. He is a member of Westerville South Athletic Hall of Fame and the OCC Hall of Fame.

During his tenure, Ed has had great support from the Administration at Westerville South High School. Ed has had many fine assistant Coaches but is extremely thankful for the loyalty and hard work of longtime assistants Pat Palumbo, Brad Burris and Trevor Klemeyer. He has also been blessed with many outstanding athletes who have sacrificed to be at their very best. It is through their diligence that the program obtained a lofty status.



TIM GABBARD

Tim Gabbard was born and raised in Franklin, Ohio, by his parents Logan and Joyce Gabbard. A three-sport athlete at Franklin High School (football, basketball, and track), he graduated in 1973 and was later inducted into the Franklin Athletic Hall of Fame in 2019.

He continued his education and football career at Wilmington College, earning a B.S. in Business and Education in 1977.

In 1978 Tim arrived in Waynesville to begin a remarkable 46-year career in education and coaching. Over the next 35 years he taught business, economics, accounting, and keyboarding while serving the district in multiple leadership roles:

- Athletic Director for 28 years, guiding the transition from the Kenton Trace Conference to the Southwestern Buckeye League
- Track & Field coach
- Head Football Coach for 10 years (and assistant coach for many more under his friend Keith Mescher), recording more wins than any football coach in Waynesville history, winning three league championships, earning State Coach of the Year

honors, and leading teams to state playoff appearances in 1981 and 1999

- Head Girls Basketball Coach from 1979 through 2025 (46 seasons), amassing 693 victories - 5th-most in Ohio Girls Basketball history - with 17 league titles, 9 district championships, 2 regional titles, a State Final Four Appearance in 2005 and a state runner-up finish in 2019

His teams and he earned 17 League Coach of the Year awards, 17 District Coach of the Year awards, 2 State Coach of the Year honors, and the Midwest Region Coach of the Year award. He was inducted into the Waynesville Athletic Hall of Fame in 2000 and received the Bob Arnzen Award in 1999.

None of the success would have been possible without his long-time assistant coaches, especially Steve York (30 years) and Kelly Bricker (20 years), one of his former players who helped the 2005 team reach the state Final Four.



JIM RUCKI

Jim Rucki was born in Steubenville, Ohio. His parents, the late Frank and Sylvia Rucki raised him along with his four older siblings in nearby Amsterdam, Ohio. He graduated from Springfield Local High School in Bergholz, Ohio, in 1980 where he played basketball for coach Rick

Baldwin. He went on to attend and play baseball at Muskingum College. In 1984, he graduated with a degree in History.

Rucki began his coaching career in 1984 in Rocky River, Ohio coaching football, basketball, and baseball at various levels. In 1987, he was named Rocky River's Head Baseball Coach and in 1989, Head Boys' Basketball Coach.

As Head Basketball Coach, Rucki inherited a program that had had nine consecutive losing seasons and averaged less than seven wins per season over the previous 20 years. The Pirates went 13-10 in his first season and 21-3 in his second. In his ten seasons at "River" the Pirates had nine winning seasons, two league championships including their first in 30 years, won their first two District Championships, and averaged 16 wins per season.

The Rucki family moved to Findlay, in Hancock County, in the Fall of 1999 when Jim was hired as the Head Basketball Coach at Findlay High School. He continued at Findlay for 25 years during which time the Trojans never had a losing season. In 2007, the Trojans won their first District Championship since 1981, and advanced to the Elite 8, the school's longest basketball tournament run since 1948. During his tenure at Findlay, the Trojans won two District championships and eight conference championships, in four different conferences. He retired after the 2024 season

OHSBCA Directory

District 1 Director

Jeff Brink, Springfield Local

District 2 Director

Sean O'Toole, Gilmour Academy

District 3 Director

Brett Larrick, Elyria Senior

District 4 Director

Josh Hose, Massillon Washington

District 5 Director

Joe Dunlevy, Indian Creek

District 6 Director

Joe Bedingfield, Willard

District 7 Director

Dave Boyce, Perrysburg

District 8 Director

Todd Boblitt, Bluffton

District 9 Director

Carla Siegel, Fort Loramie

District 10 Director

Michael Bates, Africentric

District 11 Director

Rodney Brown, River Valley

District 12 Director

Clint Crane, Caldwell

District 13 Director

Heath McKinniss, Oak Hill

District 14 Director

Josh Arey, Peebles

District 15 Director

Adam, Preifer, Centerville

District 16 Director

Ricardo Hill, Indian Hill

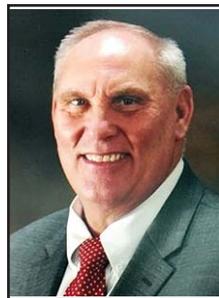


FUNDRAISING UNIVERSITY



with a career record of 545-258.

During his basketball coaching career, Rucki was awarded District Coach of the Year, (NE or NW Ohio) a total of eight times along with A.P. State Coach of the year in 1998, and OHSBCA State Coach of the Year in 2024.



JERRY SNODGRASS

A 1973 graduate of Upper Sandusky High School, Jerry Snodgrass played high school basketball for veteran coach Ron Jump and football. His continued involvement in basketball and sport administration began early in his professional career volunteering

in the BGSU men's basketball program where he graduated with honors in 1977. Hired in the Defiance City Schools teaching science and working in the very successful basketball program under legendary head coach Roger Renz, he also served as an assistant football and baseball coach. His first head coaching opportunity presented itself at Ridgedale High School in 1980. In 1983, Jerry moved on to Findlay High School. Snodgrass spent the next 27 years of his professional career at Findlay that including teaching in the science department and serving as the assistant basketball coach. When Coach Renz passed away in 1991, Snodgrass took over as the head boys' basketball coach. Jerry was hired as the school's Athletic Director in 1992, serving both roles until 1999. Jerry continued as the Findlay's Athletic Director until he was hired by the Ohio High School Athletic Association in 2008.

After 31 years in public education, Snodgrass was hired in 2008 as an Assistant Commissioner under Dr. Dan Ross at the OHSAA. His responsibilities included serving as the liaison to athletic directors in Ohio, overseeing the implementation of mandatory Coach Education and administering the sports of soccer, basketball and baseball. Eventually, while serving in this role, he administrated 13 sports with the assistance of a loyal staff working closely to enhance the athletic experience for junior high and high school athletes. The position also included conducting the state tournaments in those sports, developing many different events taking place simultaneous with the tournaments.

In 2018, Snodgrass was hired as the 10th Executive Director (formerly called "Commissioner") of the OHSAA. Taking over the position and facing deficit spending, Snodgrass re-negotiated several contracts; including state tournament site contracts, athletic department data entry contracts while overseeing the final steps that converted the OHSAA's employee pension plan while also restructuring staff responsibilities to increase organizational efficiency and becoming the first state to partner with an online

ticketing platform to provide options for tournament ticket purchases.

Snodgrass has been recognized numerous times for his servant leadership to Ohio's schools and student-athletes through honors from the Ohio House of Representatives, the Ohio Senate, the OHSAA's Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity Award, the National VFW, the Ohio and National Athletic Administrators Associations awards and his honorary membership in the Ohio Athletic Trainers Association and the NE Ohio Athletic Administrators Association's Distinguished Service Award. His leadership was recognized by induction into the Wyandot County Sports Hall of Fame, Upper Sandusky's Hall of Fame, the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame, Hancock County Sports Hall of Fame, the Ohio Athletic Administrator's (OIAAA) Hall of Fame, and the Ohio HS Baseball Coaches' Association Hall of Fame. Snodgrass is also very involved with the "Do It For 19" foundation – created in the name of his son Mark who passed away unexpectedly in 2019.

Jerry continues his service to schools and student-athletes serving as a color analyst for WOSN-TV in Lima covering high school football and basketball games across western Ohio and a public speaker on leadership.

SCHOLARSHIP SOCIETY

The OHSBCA has established the Scholarship Society to recognize Student Athletes for scholastic excellence. The Gold and Silver Certificates will be award to Seniors and Juniors who meet the criteria for the award. We want to give recognition to all Junior and Seniors who display high marks in academics, citizenship, and sportsmanship. All Juniors must have a 3.2 Grade Point Average for **Five Semesters** and Seniors must have a 3.2 Grade Point Average for **Seven Semesters**.

These athletes will able to list this honor on College Entrance papers, year books, job applications, etc. This is a significant award as it comes from the Basketball Coaches of the State of Ohio. The recipients receive a **Silver Certificate** if they are a Junior and **Gold Certificate** if they are a Senior. Their names will be listed in the Spring Edition of the **Hooplines**.

BOYS / GIRLS SENIOR PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Each year the OHSBCA selects a Player of the Year in each division of Boys Basketball. The 2025-26 season enters the 43rd year the OHSBCA has been selecting the Player of the Year. The procedures for the selection of the Player of the Year is as follows:

1. Must be a Senior
2. Must be nominated by a state member
3. Directors will vote on the Players
4. Nominees come from each OHSBCA District

Boys and Girls Players in each division will be presented a plaque at tthe North-South All-Star Game at Olentangy Liberty High School on Friday, April 26, 2026.

OHSBCA Directory

Girls DD 1 & 4

Mike Miller, Triway

Girls DD 2 & 3

Andy Booth, Wadsworth

Girls DD 5 & 12

Troy McClellan, Strasburg

Girls DD 6 & 7

Natalie Lantz, Shelby

Girls DD 8 & 9

Tracy White, Versailles

Girls DD 10 & 11

Carly Largent, Big Walnut

Girls DD 13 & 14

Jon Buchanan, Fairland

Girls DD 8 Director

Beth Simmons, Summit CD



COACHES SCHOLARSHIP

The OHSBCA Awards **Fifteen \$1,000 Scholarships** each summer to the sons and daughters of active members of the Ohio High School Basketball Coaches Association. One of the parents of the applicant must have been an *active coach in the OHSBCA for the last five consecutive years*.

Each recipient will receive a plaque courtesy of the Ohio Army National Guard and a check for \$1,000 at the North-South Game on Friday, April 24, 2026.

ACADEMIC ALL-OHIO

Each year a committee of the OHSBCA selects its "**Academic All Ohio Teams**" for the school year. 2025-26 will mark the thirtieth-third year that the association has chosen "**All Ohio Academic Teams**."

The players are selected for this honor based on their academic excellence and their athletic contributions to their basketball teams. The top 25 players will be selected for both the Boys and Girls teams.

BOYS / GIRLS COACH OF THE YEAR

Each year the OHSBCA selects a Coach of the Year in each division of Boys and Girls Basketball. The 2025-26 season enters the 43rd year the OHSBCA has been selecting the Coach of the Year. The procedures for the selection of the Coach of the Year is as follows:

1. Must be a member of the OHSBCA
2. Must be nominated by a District Director
3. Committee will review all candidates and make a recommendation to the District Directors.
4. District Directors will vote to approve the recommendation for Coach of the Year.

The winning coach in each division will be presented a plaque at the North-South All-Star Game at Olentangy Liberty High School on Friday, April 24, 2026.

TOP 20 STATISTICS AWARDS INDIVIDUALS & TEAMS

This will be the 27th year that the association has honored teams and individuals with the Best Free Throw, Two Point Field Goal and Three Point Field Goal Percentages. Certificates will be awarded to the "Top 20" Individual in Boys and Girls Free Throw, 2 Point Field Goals, and 3 Point Field Goals Shooting. All teams, individuals and coaches will be listed in the May Issue of Hooplines. Because of the success of this award the association now requires a form to be completed online by the head coach.

INDIVIDUAL TOP 20 RULES:

Free Throws - Players must have attempted at least 60 Free Throws during the regular 22 game season. Top 20 in Shooting Percentage will be honored.

Two Point Field Goal Shooting - Players must have attempted at least 110 Two Point Field Goals during the regular 22-game season. Top 20 in shooting percentage will be honored.

Three Point Field Goal Shooting - Players must have attempted at least 60 Three Point Shots during the regular 22-game season. Top 20 in Shooting Percentage will be honored.

TEAM TOP 20 RULES:

Team Free Throws, Two Point Field Goal Shooting and Three Point Field Goal Shooting will be based on the Top 20 Shooting Percentage for the regular 22 game season.

ASSISTANT COACH OF THE YEAR

For the 24th year, the OHSBCA will select the Assistant Coaches of the Year to represent the State Association in each division. Each district for each division will select one Assistant Coach for Boys and one Assistant Coach for Girls. Each representative must be a member of the OHSBCA. Each of the winners will advance as a state finalist to the OHSBCA March meeting. At the March meeting, the OHSBCA District Directors will then vote and select the Boys Assistant Coach of the Year and the Girls Assistant Coach of the Year. Three coaches for Boys and Girls will be selected with the breakdown - one coach Division I/II/III, one coach Division IV/V, and one coach Division VI/VII.

Local winners will receive a plaque at the District's Local Meeting. The State Winners will be presented their plaques at the North-South Game at Olentangy Liberty High School on Friday, April 24, 2026.

ACADEMIC TEAMS

The 2025-26 basketball season will be the 23rd year consecutive year that the Ohio High School Basketball Coaches Association will recognize basketball teams for their excellence in the classroom. Again this season the OHSBCA will be honoring the top 5 girls teams and top 5 boys teams who report the highest team GPA.

Academic Team Award Winners

Criteria:

1. Complete the nomination form using the GPA's of the top nine varsity letterman.
2. All GPA's must be converted to a 4.00 grading scale.
3. All GPA's must be carried out to two decimal places (eg. 3.95)
4. GPA's are only for the **First Semester** of the 2024-25 school year. (Not cumulative GPA's.)

Award:

1. The OHSBCA in conjunction with the **Ohio Army National Guard** will provide a plaque that can be displayed at the school to commemorate the team's academic success.
2. Winners will receive recognition in May Issue of **Hooplines**. (OHSBCA Newsletter)

Special Instructions:

The **Ohio Army National Guard** will present a plaque to the winner at a mutually agreed time.

Winning team is required to take a picture and send to the Academic Chairman, Adam Hall. Teams failing to turn in pictures will not be recognized in the May issue of **Hooplines**.