



Coaches are honored at NJSCA Hall of Fame event

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More than 350 people gathered at Pines Manor in Edison on Jan. 12 for the 29th annual New Jersey Scholastic Coaches Association Hall of Fame awards event, which was held in cooperation with the NJSIAA.

A total of 46 individuals were honored, including the 17 who were inducted into the NJSCA Hall of Fame. The others were presented National Federation coaching awards.

The Coaches Hall of Fame has a long history. Its roots date to 1961, when the New Jersey Interscholastic Coaches Association honored all football coaches with undefeated seasons.

In 1964, the NJICA honored coaches from all sports, past or present, who had been nominated from their county by their peers.

Then, in 1983, the honor award program was renamed as the NJICA “Hall of Fame” and included all past honorees.

In 1995, the New Jersey Scholastic Coaches Association assumed sponsorship of the Hall of Fame, for all head varsity coaches in the public and non-public NJSIAA member schools.

The following individuals comprised this year’s class, which brings the all-time number of honorees to 1,888.

Also honored were those receiving National Federation Coach of the Year Awards.

The NJSCA Hall of Fame is a prestigious honor, since the coaches are selected by a committee comprised of other coaches.

Among the coaches honored was Bruce Shatel, the ice hockey and baseball coach at Delbarton School.

The honor was special to Shatel, since he now joins his late father, Harry, in the NJSCA Hall of Fame. Harry Shatel, a 1992 inductee, was a legend at Morristown High School, where he was the winningest baseball coach in state history at the time of his retirement.

“I’m very flattered and humbled to receive this award,” Bruce Shatel said. “When I found out I was receiving this tremendous honor, I asked my athletic director to make sure that my dad went in before me. When I found out that he was in, it made it even more special for me.”

Bruce Shatel, who began his head coaching career at Roxbury, has spent the bulk of his leadership career at Delbarton. He has a 21-year baseball record of 426-155 and entered this hockey season with a 23-year mark of 495-89-45.

In baseball, his teams have won 11 Morris County Tournament championships and two state championships.

His hockey teams have also been outstanding, winning nine Gordon Cup championships and 11 state titles.

He's seen several of his hockey players win NCAA championships and also reach the NHL.

He also experienced the thrill of a baseball coaching lifetime this past summer, when two of his former players, shortstop Anthony Volpe of the New York Yankees, and pitcher Jack Leiter of the Texas Rangers, who played together at Delbarton, faced each other in a Major League game.

"That was a real smile for me and a great night," he said. "You never forecast that happening. For me to coach one professional, but to have two from the same team from 2019, was just incredible."

Another Hall of Fame honoree was Stephen Everette. He is currently the head football coach at Burlington Township, after previously leading the programs at Princeton and Willingboro. He has a 19-year record of 108-83.

"This is super huge," he said. "It's a tremendous honor. "There are men like Ty Belford (Willingboro) who coached me, and Glenn Howard (Paulsboro), who I also learned from, and now I get to sit beside them in the Hall of Fame. It's a great feeling. It's something you don't ever think about or feel that it will happen for you, so it's a such a great honor."

Among the coaches who received the NFHS state coach awards, one who felt especially proud was Alexa Perez of Hunterdon Central, who was the gymnastics honoree. Perez, a graduate of the school, took over the program from earlier this decade from her high school coach, Jessica Cantagallo-Rohm.

"I was a part of the program, so it's coming full circle," she said. "I took over from my coach, so it's nice to know that other people think I am making an impact. It's a really special feeling."

