



# media information

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## **Winter Recipients Of Scholar-Athlete Award Announced**

**EAST LANSING, Mich. – (Feb. 13) –** The Michigan High School Athletic Association's Scholar-Athlete Award program has selected its nine scholarship recipients for the 2001 winter sports season.

Farm Bureau Insurance, in its 12th year of sponsoring the award, will give a \$1,000 college scholarship to each of the nine winter sport winners. Farm Bureau will present a total of 24 scholarships, one for each sport in which the MHSAA sponsors a postseason tournament.

Each of the scholarship recipients will be honored at halftime ceremonies of the Class C Boys Basketball final game at the Breslin Student Events Center in East Lansing on March 24. Commemorative plaques will be given to other finalists in recognition of their accomplishments.

The nine Scholar-Athlete Award honorees for the 2001 winter sports season are: Reed J. Langton, Monroe St. Mary Catholic Central, boys basketball; Antonette Bitonti, Pontiac Notre Dame, girls competitive cheer; Christine Victor, Grosse Pointe North, girls gymnastics; Christopher Weier, Warren DeLaSalle, ice hockey; Kirk Anderson, Negaunee, boys skiing; Kate Quirk, Traverse City Central, girls skiing; Jeremy R. Backus, West Bloomfield, boys swimming & diving; Amy Lyn King, Pigeon Laker, girls volleyball; Justin Alan DeLay, Roscommon, wrestling.

Overviews of the nine scholarship recipients of the winter Scholar-Athlete Award follow. A quote from each recipient's essay is also included:

**Boys Basketball -- Reed J. Langton, Monroe St Mary Catholic Central.** Earned three varsity letters in basketball, football and track and field ... Huron League Scholar-Athlete winner as a senior ... First Team All-League in track and field as a sophomore and junior, and medalist at MHSAA Division 3 Lower Peninsula Finals in the 3,200-Meter Relay ... elected class President as a senior, Vice-President as a junior, and served on Student Senate for four years ... member of National Honor Society and Rotary Interact Club ... involved with church's eucharistic ministry and participated in the Appalachian Exchange in Tennessee ... will study Mechanical Engineering at Michigan State University or Michigan Tech University.

*Essay Quote - "Sportsmanship teaches athletes to play fair, be good losers, and gracious winners. Athletes can use these characteristics in their interactions with other people in situations in school, their job, and all other aspects of life. It is important that the participants as well as coaches do all that they can to make sportsmanship the major focus of educational athletics."*

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## 2-2-2 – Winter Scholar-Athlete Award Recipients

**Girls Competitive Cheer -- Antonette Bitonti, Pontiac Notre Dame.** Lettered four times in competitive cheer ... elected captain as a senior ... member of 1998 Detroit Catholic League Competitive Cheer championship team ... involved in National Honor Society and Students Against Drunk Driving ... participated in Girls Scouts for 12 years and took piano lessons for 11 years ... awarded Leadership Award and Silver Award in Girls Scouts, Prom Gala Award of Achievement in SADD and received Highest Honors in NHS ... served community by visiting nursing homes at Christmas and helping with Junior Girls Scouts ... will attend Michigan State University and study pre-medicine or pre-nursing.

*Essay Quote - "In cheerleading, sportsmanship is key to competing. It is such a great feeling to hear all the other teams cheering for you when you are out on the floor. That is why I love the sport of cheerleading so much. It gives you the opportunity to really show what sportsmanship is about. The cheerleaders are the ones who encourage positive behavior at all the sports events and use their role as 'leaders' to promote this."*

**Girls Gymnastics -- Christine Victor, Grosse Pointe North.** Awarded four varsity letters in gymnastics and one in tennis and track and field ... named gymnastics MVP as a sophomore and qualified for the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Class A Tennis Finals as a senior ... elected Advanced Placement U.S. History Seminar Director as a junior ... participated in the Varsity Club for four years, Valkyries for three, and National Honor Society for two ... also involved in Adopt A Family and tutoring ... will study pre-medicine at the University of Michigan.

*Essay Quote - "Although society tends to only view and admire the talent of athletes, sportsmanship plays a far more superior role. The existence of sportsmanship among athletes separates those who qualify as role models against those who are bad influences on society. An athlete who demonstrates sportsmanship portrays the importance it upholds because its qualities can be applied to life also."*

**Ice Hockey -- Christopher Weier, Warren DeLaSalle.** Lettered twice in ice hockey and lacrosse ... named to Detroit Catholic High School League All-Academic team in lacrosse ... member of National Honor Society ... won numerous local and statewide honors as Science Olympiad participant .. also serves as a tutor and eucharistic minister and retreat leader for the campus ministry ... volunteered as a nursing staff assistant for local hospital and is a Certified Special Olympics Trainer ... will attend the University of Michigan and study pre-medicine or biochemistry.

*Essay Quote – "Sportsmanship calls on all individuals to rise above the chatter and commotion, to play on with the same passion and emotion, but to remain temperate and even-keeled. The true and intelligent participant removes oneself from the altercations and strives to encourage other players to also recognize the problem and retain their composure."*

**Boys Skiing -- Kirk Anderson, Negaunee.** Awarded four varsity letters in skiing and tennis ... participated in the jazz band, marching band and pep band throughout high school ... member of National Honor Society ... volunteered for Habitat For Humanity and with the church youth group ... will study engineering at Michigan Tech University or the University of Michigan.

*Essay Quote – "Good sportsmanship isn't a uniform pulled on for the big game and then thrown into the laundry until the next competition. Instead, it is a part of a person's life and character. Good sportsmen conduct themselves responsibly even when the fans aren't watching. How an athlete acts when no one is looking is what makes a good athlete great."*

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### 3-3-3 – Winter Scholar-Athlete Award Recipients

**Girls Skiing -- Kate Quirk, Traverse City Central.** Lettered four times in skiing and two times in both tennis and soccer ... named to All-State ski team three times and All-State tennis team twice ... finished as runner-up at the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Tennis Finals on two occasions ... won Michigan Coaches Association Scholar-Athlete Award as junior ... member of Unites States Ski Association Junior Olympic Team for two years ... served as “Just Say No” Peer Counselor and substance abuse group moderator for junior high students ... member of National Honor Society ... involved in community fundraisers for Northwestern Community College and Munson Hospital ... will attend the University of Colorado and study elementary education.

*Essay Quote – “It is the athletes themselves whose attitude will determine how they accept the outcome, win or lose. Those athletes who are dedicated to sportsmanship can pick up their heads after a hard-fought defeat, shake the hands of their opponents, congratulate them on a well-deserved victory, and walk away with a positive experience. In other words, the true competitor, the true sportsmen, is always just as gracious in defeat as he is in victory.”*

**Boys Swimming & Diving -- Jeremy R. Backus, West Bloomfield.** Awarded four varsity letters in both swimming and diving ... named team captain as a senior and Diver of the Year as a junior ... served as manager for both the girls swimming and basketball teams ... member of the National Honor Society and Volunteer Impact Program ... honored as Eagle Scout ... volunteers as Junior Assistant Scoutmaster for local Boy Scouts of America and assistant coach for middle school swimming and diving program ... will study engineering at the University of Michigan.

*Essay Quote – “High school athletics cannot be separated from academic pursuits. The lessons learned in athletic arenas can be no less important than the lessons we learn in the classroom. While honing our technical skills in math class, our people skills are perfected on the sports field, pools and courts. Sportsmanship is a critical element in scholastic athletics”*

**Girls Volleyball -- Amy Lyn King, Pigeon Laker.** Lettered twice in volleyball and basketball and four times in softball ... three-year captain of softball team and captained basketball team as a senior ... named second team All-Conference in softball twice ... earned Greater Thumb All-Conference Scholar Athlete Award ... served as Class President for four years and on Student Council for four years ... named Secretary of National Honor Society ... member of the Science Club and the Prom Committee ... volunteered as a Youth Group and Bible study leader, assisted occupational therapist at the elementary school and helped junior high girls at the Bay Shore Basketball Camp ... will attend Alma College and study elementary education.

*Essay Quote - "Displaying good sportsmanship in athletic events is extremely important. In every competition someone will win and someone will lose. Being the victorious one is exciting and gratifying, but being part of a loss takes as much or more class to show good sportsmanship. The real winners are the ones who are positive in the end no matter the outcome."*

**Wrestling -- Justin Alan DeLay, Roscommon.** Earned four varsity letters in wrestling and two each in soccer and track and field ... captained wrestling team for two years and soccer team for one ... state qualifier in wrestling while winning District and Regional championships ... named First Team All-District in soccer ... elected freshman class President, sophomore class Representative, Student Council President and Vice-President ... member of National Honor Society ... participated in school musicals throughout high school, including having the lead in "Bye Bye Birdie," and involved with the chamber choir and men's ensemble for three years ... volunteered with Habitat For Humanity and coordinated and emceed Veteran's Day Ceremony ... will attend the University of Michigan.

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#### 4-4-4 – Winter Scholar-Athlete Award Recipients

*Essay Quote - "If so much is worthy of regard in a simple athletic event, then it must be necessary in the rest of life. This is the connection that educational athletics strive to make. The field of play is a training ground for the real world. Just like in sport, there are the rules, the refs, the team and the opponent. And just like on the field, all these aspects demand to be held in high esteem."*

**Other winter finalists by sport for the Scholar-Athlete Award were:** **Boys Basketball** -- Russell Gajos, Warren Fitzgerald; Marcus A. Reath, Wyoming Godwin Heights; Michael Wolking, Grosse Pointe South; Craig Emmert, Cass City; Nicholas William Marietti, North Muskegon; Christopher Euler, Indian River Inland Lakes. **Girls Competitive Cheer** -- Kelly Volker, Jenison. **Girls Gymnastics** -- Kelly Thompson, St Johns; Christine Victor, Grosse Pointe North. **Ice Hockey** -- Kahn Lee, Jenison. **Boys Skiing** -- John Goebel, Detroit Catholic Central. **Girls Skiing** -- Leah Sanders, Ortonville-Brandon. **Boys Swimming & Diving** -- Christopher Sarasin, Marquette; David Michael Weinberg, Ann Arbor Huron. **Girls Volleyball** -- Megan Erskine, Grand Ledge; Cindy Meyerand, Utica; Kathleen Elizabeth Morgan, Flat Rock; Erin C. Ackerman, Bridgman; Kelly O'Connor, Suttons Bay; Karen Kaye, Saugatuck. **Wrestling** -- Christopher Litvin, Redford Thurston; Jordan James Earley, East Kentwood; Christopher T. Hannasch, Holt; James Ranger, Lapeer West.

Students applying for the Scholar-Athlete Award must be carrying at least a 3.5 (on a 4.0 scale) grade-point average, and have previously won a letter in a varsity sport in which the Michigan High School Athletic Association sponsors a postseason tournament. Other requirements for the applicants were to show active participation in other school and community activities and produce an essay on the importance of sportsmanship in educational athletics.

Spring sports scholarship recipients will be announced on Feb. 20. Fall honorees were: Becky A. Stepp, Waterford Kettering, girls basketball; Tom Hakim, Clinton Township Chippewa Valley, boys cross country; Karen Elizabeth Latus, New Buffalo, girls cross country; Kevin Christopher Cleary, Grosse Pointe North, football; Jack McKinnon, St. Ignace, boys golf; Robert Ross Coleman, Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern, boys soccer; Kathryn Ladewski, Ann Arbor Pioneer, girls swimming & diving; Priya Malviya, Holland, girls tennis.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,300 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments, which attract approximately 1.6 million spectators each year.

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