



media information

1661 ramblewood drive · east lansing, mi 48823 · 517.332.5046 · fax - 517.332.4071 ·
www.mhsaa.com

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Contact: John Johnson or Randy Allen

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517.332.5046 or www.mhsaa.com

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 2002 winter sports season.

Farm Bureau Insurance, in its 13th 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 23. Commemorative plaques will be given to other finalists in recognition of their accomplishments.

The nine Scholar-Athlete Award honorees for the 2002 winter sports season are: Ryan Darrell Kaminski, Midland Bullock Creek, boys basketball; Laura Riebschleger, Houghton Lake, girls competitive cheer; Kim Le, Muskegon Reeths-Puffer, girls gymnastics; Cameron Dingwall, Mattawan, ice hockey; Matt Gotham, Ironwood, boys skiing; Nicole Murch, Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern, girls skiing; Brian Murphy, Birmingham Hills Brother Rice, boys swimming and diving; Suzanne McGoey, Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett, girls volleyball; and Matthew Oliver Harsha-Strong, Novi, 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 -- Ryan Darrell Kaminski, Midland Bullock Creek. Earned three varsity letters in basketball and golf, and two in track & field ... offensive and defensive basketball team MVP ... all-area Dream Team, first team all-area Class B, and honorable mention all-state in basketball as a junior ... elected Bible study President as a senior and Vice President as a junior ... member of National Honor Society ... participated on Heart and Soul drama team for four years ... involved with Project D.A.R.E., the Ruster Foundation Sportsmanship Workshop, Midland Mall Art Expo and volunteered for Midland Center for the Arts ... will study advertising in college.

Essay Quote - "It always seems that the finger is pointed at the athlete when sportsmanship is mentioned, but is it all up to the athlete? No, of course not! In today's sports there are four areas responsible for sportsmanship. They are the athlete, coach, spectators, and referees. Each area is equally important and has a part to do in ensuring good sportsmanship. All have the responsibility to be a good role models, for their actions are seen by everyone else."

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

Girls Competitive Cheer -- Laura Riebschleger, Houghton Lake. Lettered two times in competitive cheer and four times in girls soccer ... three-year member of Key Club and Interact ... participated in Student Senate for four years, Senate Vice President as a junior, Senate President as a senior ... member of National Honor Society and school marching band ... awarded Junior Miss Scholastic Award Winner as a senior ... volunteered for American Red Cross blood drives and King's Nursing Home ... served community as a sixth-grade camp counselor ... will attend the University of Michigan or University of Notre Dame and study business and marketing.

Essay Quote - "Sportsmanship is very important in educational athletics. Sportsmanship can be shown through respect, and through simple gestures like a 'high five' at the end of a game. When athletes choose to act as good sports, the level of play is much higher, and there are fewer injuries. Sportsmanship can be useful through life's many competitions, so it is better to learn it at an early age. Athletes are chosen as community representatives, and being a good sport is a great way to make one's community proud."

Girls Gymnastics -- Kim Le, Muskegon Reeths-Puffer. Awarded two letters in gymnastics and volleyball, and four in softball ... qualified for gymnastics regionals on beam, floor, and vault ... received volleyball Coach's Award as a sophomore ... participated in band and colorguard for four years, was oboe section leader for three years, and captained regional, state, and national champion colorguard squad for two years ... also involved in Concerned About Teen Sexuality and was Vice President and President of Lutheran Youth Organization ... will study pre-medicine at Michigan Tech University or Michigan State University.

Essay Quote - "Athletes needs to remember that they represent their entire high school whenever they put on that uniform. How they act, how they treat the opposing team and the game officials reflects on the entire school. An athlete should have enough pride in their school and in themselves to not want to tarnish that uniform. Even though a game or a meet only lasts for a few hours, sportsmanship leaves an impression on the community that lasts for years."

Ice Hockey -- Cameron Dingwall, Mattawan. Lettered twice in ice hockey and football and once in wrestling ... named team captain and Coach's Award winner in hockey ... awarded football team Iron Man Award three times, Coach's All-Academic Team, Will-to-Win Athlete, and team captain ... participated in Student Council as class President all four years ... member of National Honor Society ... also participated in Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and Forensics ... served as a tutor and mentor ... volunteered at Bronson Methodist Hospital ... will attend Washington University in St. Louis and study pre-medicine.

Essay Quote - "Sportsmanship is so important because it teaches us values that extend well beyond the arena of sports. Long after we forget the score of our last game, we hold with us the lessons of camaraderie, determination, and hard work. By being a good sport, both in winning and losing, we take with us something applicable in all areas of life. I know that I have gained much more from hockey than some nice awards and a couple of scars. I have learned the value of leadership and dependability."

Boys Skiing -- Matt Gotham, Ironwood. Awarded three varsity letters in skiing and track & field, and two in football ... won giant slalom at MHSAA Class B-C-D Regionals and was runner-up in slalom as a junior ... part of CUSSA Junior Olympic Team ... elected student representative to Board of Education and Student Senate President as a senior ... member of National Honor Society ... involved in Spanish Club, church activities, suicide prevention group, and is a High Five mentor ... will study international business at Ferris State University.

Essay Quote - "Good sportsmanship should not be shown only to appeal to a scout and should not be applied only during athletic competitions. It must not be forgotten during everyday life. As athletes, especially high school athletes, we must keep the ideals of sportsmanship in the backs of our minds at all times, not only thinking about them, but living them."

(more)

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

Girls Skiing -- Nicole Murch, Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern. Lettered in skiing and cross country ... named to all-area, all-region, and second team all-state ski team ... member of Unites States Ski Association Junior Olympic Team ... served as a peer educator, crisis help-line listener, and with interfaith homeless ministry ... member of National Honor Society ... involved in Christian Athletes, Young Life, and All School Charity Opportunities and Activity Days ... will attend the University of Michigan and study psychology.

Essay Quote – "The true test for high school athletes will not be when they are winning, but when they stumble or fall. It may be physically, mentally or spiritually. As it was for me, this is when the values of sportsmanship will help them get back up. Athletics was my first real teacher and the lessons I learned, I will use for a lifetime."

Boys Swimming & Diving -- Brian Murphy, Birmingham Hills Brother Rice. Awarded four varsity letters in swimming ... named to all-area, all-state, and honorable mention All-America teams in 400-meter freestyle relay during junior year ... served in Student Senate for four years and was President in senior year ... member of National Honor Society ... participated in mission trip to Mexico, forensics, and was a yearbook photographer ... volunteered as religious education teacher assistant, St. Owen's youth group, and as an alter server and eucharistic minister ... will study business or law at the University of Notre Dame.

Essay Quote – "Good sports with class handle victory and defeat in the same way. They always praise their opponent for a job well done and admit their own shortcomings. A good sport allows his actions to speak louder than his words. A good sport serves as an example for others to follow. A good sport never makes excuses. When you act appropriately, you can assume leadership roles and influence, motivate and shape others by your daily actions."

Girls Volleyball -- Suzanne McGoey, Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett. Lettered twice in volleyball, three times in softball, and four times in field hockey ... captain and MVP of field hockey team ... named second team all-conference in volleyball, first team all-conference and twice all-region in softball ... twice named first team all-state in field hockey ... served on Athletic Council and was a Junior Counselor and Ambassador ... wrote for school newspaper ... member of French Club and Chamber Orchestra ... volunteered at St. John's Hospital, Muscular Dystrophy camp, and helped aid underprivileged children in Detroit ... will attend Yale University and study psychology.

Essay Quote - "Sportsmanship is being a good winner as well as losing with grace. It's knowing when to have healthy competition and knowing when to let the game go. Sportsmanship is very important in athletics as it is the core of competition. I think that sportsmanship is at its best when one cannot predict its widespread impact."

Wrestling -- Matthew Oliver Harsha-Strong, Novi. Earned three varsity letters in wrestling, two in cross country, and participated in track & field ... captained wrestling team senior year ... member of Student Council, Interact Club, and chair of National Honor Society activities committee ... participated in Model United Nations and National Chemistry Olympiad ... elected Secretary for Spanish Club during junior year and President senior year ... received Principal's Leadership Award and Good Citizen Award ... volunteered with Botsford General Hospital ... Founder and President of Teens Aiding the Cancer Community, Inc. raising over \$15,000 ... will attend the University of Michigan, Harvard University, Stanford University, Yale University or Princeton University to study political science.

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

Essay Quote - "Sportsmanship in educational athletics is imperative. The traits of courage, good judgment, integrity, respect and perseverance that are taught by sportsmanship can be used to achieve goals in athletics and in life. In order to ensure that every athlete learns these qualities, the sportsmanship superstars must lead by example."

Other winter finalists by sport for the Scholar-Athlete Award were: **Boys Basketball** -- Matthew R. Elsey, Farmington Hills Harrison; Brian Flietstra, Hudsonville Unity Christian; Erik Lehmann, Monroe St. Mary Catholic Central; Jeffrey Lance Rhoads, Fairview; David Michael Smith, Gaylord St. Mary; Ryan T. Williams, Plymouth Salem. **Girls Competitive Cheer** -- Lauren Marie Kohler, Pontiac Notre Dame. **Girls Gymnastics** -- Rosalie Claire Blank, Rochester. **Ice Hockey** -- Michael Sachau, Lansing Catholic Central. **Boys Skiing** -- David Boboltz, Rockford. **Girls Skiing** -- Sally Engler, Mt. Pleasant. **Boys Swimming & Diving** -- Corey R. Kanitz, Dundee; Steven Jay Rozema, Holland Christian. **Girls Volleyball** -- Megan J. Angerer, Dundee; Sunny Dalgord, Cooks Big Bay deNoc; Melissa Gallego, Romeo; Abby Lund, Shelby; Katherine E. Rich, Battle Creek Lakeview; Jenna Wilkes, Alma. **Wrestling** -- Feng Pei Du, Saginaw Heritage; Justin Langlois, Muskegon Mona Shores; Scott M. Miller, Dundee; Joe Sacksteder, Mendon.

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: Jaime Fornetti, Kingsford, girls basketball; Armon Mahajerin, Saginaw Heritage, boys cross country; Angela Hiner, Monroe Jefferson, girls cross country; Timothy Kareem Khoury, Cass City, football; Brian Hammer, Elk Rapids, boys golf; Jeffrey G. Shumer, North Farmington, boys soccer; Sarah Gelwicks, Monroe St. Mary Catholic Central, girls swimming and diving; and Noorain Fatima Khan, Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central, 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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