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Will Lynch To Receive 2008 Norris Award

EAST LANSING, Mich. – May 12 – Sporting a passion and enthusiasm that has attracted numerous young people into the ranks of high school game officials, Will Lynch of Honor has been selected to receive the Michigan High School Athletic Association's Vern L. Norris Award for 2008.

The Norris Award is presented annually to a veteran official who has been active in a local officials association, has mentored other officials, and has been involved in officials' education. It is named for Vern L. Norris, who was executive director of the MHSAA from 1978-86, and well-respected by officials on the state and national levels. Lynch will be presented the award at the MHSAA's 29th annual Officials' Awards and Alumni Banquet on May 10 at the Lansing Sheraton Hotel.

If you combine the time of the roles of teacher-coach and teacher-official, Lynch has given over 70 years of service to high school sports. He is in his 41st year as a registered official in basketball and football, and for 30 years, he was a teacher and basketball-football coach at Benzie Central High School. His 1987 basketball team reached the Class C championship game in the MHSAA Tournament.

As a member of the Betsie Valley Officials Association, Lynch took a leadership role in the recruiting and training of young officials when the MHSAA launched its Legacy program in 1992. Lynch has mentored at least one high school-aged official in each year since then, and been involved in weekly training and evaluation of young officials. He has also served as a mentor in helping numerous adults get their officiating careers started.

Lynch's community work has also been geared towards serving young people. He organized and directed Saturday basketball programs and summer weeknight open gym programs for 30 years that were free to the participants. With his wife, Barb, the Lynches continue to be active in Benzie Central athletics as booster club volunteers.

A 1960 graduate of Highland Park High School, Lynch earned an Associate's degree from Highland Park Community College in 1962; and his Bachelor's of Science degree from the University of Michigan in 1964.

"When you ask people to describe Will Lynch, they all describe a man who leads by example, and leads by caring for others," said MHSAA Executive Director John E. "Jack" Roberts. "Whether it was as a teacher, coach, and especially as an official, Will Lynch always made his presence felt in a way that was encouraging.

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2-2-2 – Lynch Receives Norris Award

“The dedication to bring so many young people into the worthwhile avocation of officiating, and give them all the wonderful gift of time to mentor them so they grow into that role is a trait that stands out when honoring someone with the Vern Norris Award. The legacy Will Lynch gives us is one that helps provide our future officiating leaders, and that is a great award as well.”

Previous recipients of the Norris Award are:

1992 – Ted Wilson, East Detroit

1993 – Fred Briggs, Burton

1994 – Joe Brodie, Flat Rock

1995 – Jim Massar, Flint

1996 – Jim Lamoreaux, St. Ignace

1997 – Ken Myllyla, Escanaba

1998 – Blake Hagman, Kalamazoo

1999 – Richard Kalahar, Jackson

2000 – Barb Beckett, Traverse City; Karl Newingham, Bay City

2001 – Herb Lipschultz, Kalamazoo

2002 – Robert Scholie, Hancock

2003 – Ron Nagy, Hazel Park

2004 – Carl Van Heck, Grand Rapids

2005 – Bruce Moss, Alma

2006 – Jeanne Skinner, Grand Rapids

2007 – Terry Wakeley, Grayling

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,800 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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