

Connector -- March 11, 2009

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In a nation of roughly four million youth and high school sports coaches, Positive Coaching Alliance has named six as 2009 National Double-Goal Coach® Award winners for their positive impact on youth athletes. And, from among tens of thousands of schools and youth sports organizations, three have earned our Honoring the Game Award for organizational excellence.

Following are brief profiles of each, plus our honorees for the National Leadership Award and the Ronald L. Jensen Award for Lifetime Achievement. We invite you to consider their accomplishments, share your reflections on our [Youth Sports Nation blog](#) and for more information on the Eighth Annual National Youth Sports Awards sponsored by Deloitte, scheduled for April 24 at Stanford University's Maples Pavilion, [click here](#).

### **Double-Goal Coach Award Winners**

#### **Chris Abbott - Headfirst Baseball, Washington, DC**

"I love teaching kids things they will be able to use throughout their lives. Baseball is uniquely suited to teach kids how to pick themselves back up from failure, because even the best ballplayers, who hit .300, are failing at the plate seven times out of ten. My goal as a coach is always to improve my ability to communicate effectively with the kids so that I can teach them lessons through the game."

#### **Jamal Adams - Loyola High School Basketball, Los Angeles, CA**

"I try to get my players to understand that even within their athletic careers there are all kinds of aspects to being not only a good athlete but a good person. I coach in terms of wanting to see our guys grow up as a whole person....The best part of coaching is talking to my ex-players. I recently was brow-beaten by my wife to join Facebook, and all of a sudden I have a hundred friends, ex-players who have found me."

#### **Ed Buller - Oak Grove High School Football, San Jose, CA**

Soon to relinquish his coaching position so he can focus on his role as athletic director and the fight to save East Side Union High School District sports from budget cuts, Buller said: "This year I had a couple athletes whose parents I had coached. I've had players in the NFL, the Marines, and Navy SEALs. I've been invited to their weddings, and unfortunately I've had to deliver a few eulogies. The relationship you build with student-athletes, you can't put a price tag on it."

**Ted Gustus - Canarsie High School Basketball, Brooklyn, NY**

For more than 30 years, Gustus has coached basketball and served as a teacher, crisis intervention counselor, life skills and academic coach. Notable protégés include former NBA stars Rolando Blackman and John Salley. Gustus "got into coaching because I wanted a vehicle to involve young people in the community and neighborhoods. Basketball became a tool to help many fatherless sons. Basketball is a catalyst. I always say, 'Before you can clean a fish, you have to catch it,' and we used basketball to catch them and help change their lives."

**Richard Kruse - Ursuline Academy Cross Country and Track, Newark, DE**

"We have a great group of kids and a great group of parents. I'm a facilitator. I threw down the gauntlet for the kids and challenged them a little more, and I've been impressed with how they can meet challenges that are beyond their wildest dreams."

**Karen Ronney - Patrick Henry High School Tennis, San Diego, CA**

"I would like the lessons learned through sports to transcend into life," said Ronney, author of *Proud Parents' Guide to Raising Athletic, Balanced, and Coordinated Kids*. "We have personal notebooks for each player, where she writes to me and I write back. Through this notebook program we addressed life goals and sports goals, and that's how we blended sports and life. It was easy for kids who were verbal, but it was miraculous for the introverted, because I got to know them in a way that had not been possible before."

**Honoring the Game Award Winners**

**Berkeley Little League (baseball), Bayville, NJ**

Keying their selection: Outstanding service to the children, ages 5 to 18, who play in the league; extensive outreach to neighboring youth sports organizations, the Lakewood Blue Claws minor league baseball team and New Jersey media outlets to extol the virtues of creating a positive, character-building youth sports environment; and earning PCA's Seal of Commitment for ensuring that all Berkeley Little League coaches are trained and certified as Double-Goal Coaches.

**Kamehameha Schools Hawaii (multiple sports), Kea'au, HI**

Keying their selection: Outstanding service to the children, ages 11 to 18, who participate in the schools' 22 sports programs; integrating the school principle of *pu'uhonua* (sanctuary) into the athletics program, ensuring appropriate behavior toward referees and other visitors; and mandatory parent and student-athlete attendance at all Positive Coaching Alliance workshops.

**St. Raphael Football, Naperville, IL**

Keying their selection: Outstanding service to the 2,578 children, ages 6 to 13, who participate in the organization; a mission since the organization's founding in 1963 to "create a developmental opportunity for children, coaches and parents that could be experienced while children have fun learning to play football"; emotionally charged testimonial letters, including one from a player's mother crediting St. Raphael Football for helping her son overcome ADD, learning disabilities and "a severe anger management problem" to the point where he could be "mainstreamed" in school.

**National Leadership Award Winner**

**American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), Hawthorne, CA**

AYSO is just the second winner of this honor in the eight-year history of PCA's National Youth Sports Awards. The reasons: Outstanding service to the 600,000 children, ages 4 to 19, who play soccer in AYSO's almost 1000 community leagues (called Regions) throughout the U.S.; a 44-year history of commitment to core philosophies of Everyone Plays™, Balanced Teams, Open registration, Positive Coaching, and Good Sportsmanship; and child-centric programs, such as the Safe Haven™, an organization-wide child and volunteer safety initiative, and Kids Zone™, a child-friendly sideline initiative that helps spectators remember they're cheerleaders and not critics.

### **Ronald L. Jensen Award for Lifetime Achievement**

#### **Tara VanDerveer, Head Women's Basketball Coach, Stanford University**

Joining us to honor Coach VanDerveer for her career as a Double-Goal Coach, whose wins include an Olympic Gold Medal and two NCAA Championships, are many of her current and former players, including two-time Olympic Gold Medalist, former WNBA star and PCA National Advisory Board Member Ruthie Bolton. Also featured: Olympic Gold Medal Swimmer and PCA National Advisory Board Member Summer Sanders.

PCA hopes you also can [join us at the event](#) on April 24, and that you will [nominate coaches or organizations](#) for us to consider for our 2010 National Youth Sports Awards.

### **Coaching Tip: Facing Tough Times During a Game? "Keep Coaching"**

PCA workshops often emphasize the "next play," training coaches and parents to help their athletes focus on the "next play," regardless of mistakes, disagreeable officiating, tough opponents or crowd noise.

To illustrate this principle, our PCA Trainers often use this quotation from Stanford Women's Volleyball Coach John Dunning: "So many kids think they're great competitors because they growl the loudest or cuss the loudest. I define a competitor as the person who is most often ready to play and win the next play."

Ironically, sometimes coaches forget to apply the same principles to themselves. Facing tough times during a game, coaches also need a way to remind themselves to be ready for the next play. For a solution to this situation, [click here](#).

**Positive Coaching Alliance**  
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