



NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

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Don Bales to Receive NIAAA Award of Merit

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (November 11, 2008) — **Don Bales**, CMAA, longtime athletic director at Lowell (Indiana) High School, is the 2008 recipient of the Award of Merit presented by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA).

Bales will receive his award December 15 in San Diego, California, during luncheon festivities at the 39th annual National Conference of High School Directors of Athletics conducted jointly by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and the NIAAA.

The Award of Merit is the most prestigious award presented by the NIAAA to an individual who has shown outstanding leadership in interscholastic athletics or related areas.

Now in his 35th year in interscholastic athletics, Bales began his career as a cross country, baseball and basketball coach at Portage (Indiana) Township Schools from

1974 to 1979. From 1979 to 1981, he taught and coached varsity basketball at Tri-Creek (Indiana) Schools. He has been the athletic director at Lowell High School since 1981.

Bales, who was a 1970 graduate of Hebron (Indiana) High School, graduated in 1974 from Indiana Central College (now the University of Indianapolis) with a degree in physical education, health and biology. In 1979, he earned a master's degree in secondary education at Indiana University Northwest.

A longtime leader in athletic administration at the national level, Bales served on the NIAAA Board of Directors from 1996 to 1999, including a term as president. He currently serves as chairperson of the NIAAA Leadership Training State Coordinators, is the liaison of the Professional Development Committee to the NIAAA board, and serves as chair of the second five-year NIAAA Strategic Plan.

Bales is a certified Leadership Training Course instructor and has been on the leadership training committee since 1998. He became a Certified Athletic Administrator in 1995 and received his Certified Master Athletic Administrator designation in 2000.

Among his honors, Bales was recognized with the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 1997 and was an NFHS Citation Award winner in 1999. Additionally, he was selected as the "National Athletic Director of the Year" in 2004.

Within the state of Indiana, Bales is a lifetime member of the Indiana Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (IIAAA), for which he served as president in 1992-93. He was named District I IIAAA Athletic Director of the Year twice — in 1994 and again in 2003, was chosen Indiana Athletic Director of the Year in 2003 and was recognized as the "I" Person of the Year by the University of Indianapolis Greyhound Club in 2004.

During his career at Lowell High School, Bales has created the first-ever Lowell High student handbook, established the Lowell High School Athletic Hall of Fame, designed and wrote a sportsmanship guide and has developed coach mentoring and orientation programs. Bales was selected Lowell High School “Most Influential Teacher” both in 2004 and 2006 and was named Teacher’s Credit Union “Teacher of the Month” in 1997.

In addition, Bales reorganized the Letterman’s Club at Lowell and developed the Student Athletic Leadership Council. He served as the athletic representative to the construction team for the renovation of all athletic facilities from 2002 to 2005, and he currently serves on the “Inferno Alliance” Booster Club, which was organized to raise funds for further development of outdoor athletic facilities. He also served as sportsmanship chair for the further development of spirit and sportsmanship within the Lowell school environment.

A prolific speaker, Bales has presented many times over the years at the national, state and local levels. Along with public speaking, he serves as a nursing home Sunday service presenter, teaches an adult Sunday school class called F.R.I.E.N.D.S. and organizes and coaches youth sports programs.

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About the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA)

The NIAAA is the largest national organization for high school athletic administrators with more than 6,000 individual members. The NIAAA consists of athletic director organizations in the 50 states plus the District of Columbia and provides an efficient system for exchange of ideas between the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and state athletic administrators organizations as well as individual athletic administrators. The NIAAA, located in Indianapolis, Indiana, strives to preserve the educational nature of interscholastic athletics and the place of these programs in the curricula of schools. The NIAAA is a full and equal partner with the NFHS. For more information, visit the NIAAA Web site at www.niaaa.org.

About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 18,500 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

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