

Best Of 2025 PREPS

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of the
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school student
athletes!

STUDENT-ATHLETE AWARDS



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The Best of the Best

Cory Smith
csmith@thecmtairynews.com

The top athletes and coaches from a five-county area were celebrated at the eighth-annual Best of Preps Awards Banquet on May 20.

More than 180 high school athletes, coaches, relatives and friends convened at Mount Airy Baptist Church for the banquet, put on by the Mount Airy Regional Media Group, which recognized the highest athletic achievements and performances of the 2024-25 school year.

Athletes and coaches from 13 high schools across five counties – Surry, Stokes, Wilkes and Yadkin Counties in North Carolina and Carroll County in Virginia – were eligible for the Best of

Preps awards.

Each school submitted nominations, then the nominees were voted on by a panel of local sportswriters with input from coaches. Awards were handed out for each state-sanctioned sport as well as other awards that honor the top overall athletes, athletes that are active in their community, the top athletic director, athletes that overcame injuries and coaches that went the extra mile this past year.

This year's banquet also introduced a new award to honor Sandy Hurley – the former publisher of the Mount Airy Regional Media Group who was instrumental to the success of the Best of Preps Awards.

The 2024-25 awards recognized athletes that combined for more than two dozen state championships. These athletes ranged from a freshman pitcher that led her team to a deep playoff run to an 11-time state champion that will suit up for UNC Chapel-Hill in the fall.

In addition to their awards, attendees were treated to a guest speaker that experienced success at every level of baseball: Danny Sheaffer.

Sheaffer was a first-round draft pick in 1981 who went on to play professionally for seven MLB



ALLEN WORRELL | THE CARROLL NEWS
Serena Bowman, General Manager of The Mount Airy Regional Media Group, speaks to a packed house of more than 180 guests during the annual Best of Preps Banquet.



ALLEN WORRELL | THE CARROLL NEWS
Retired MLB player Danny Sheaffer served as the guest speak at this year's Best of Preps Banquet.

franchises over the span of 18 years. His road to the Show was winding and featured numerous highs and lows, but he persevered and made it to the pinnacle of his sport.

After his playing career, Sheaffer moved into management before retiring from the sport in 2020. Now, Sheaffer spends his time running the FIRM Foundation, which is aimed at coaching and mentoring young athletes. All the money generated by the foundation goes back to the community to support full-time missionaries, pro-life ministries and short-term mission trips for middle school and high school students.

Sheaffer called the athletes in attendance the best of the best. While talent is important, Sheaffer stressed the importance of self-motivation, maintaining focus, not listening to doubters or people that want to hinder your progress, fighting through adversity and making a difference in the world.

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Aniya Edwards

PREMIER STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

Aniya Edwards set the bar wherever she went, whether that was on the track, in the classroom or in her community.

Edwards won three state championships as a senior – one in indoor track and two in outdoor track. For indoor track, she won a 1A/2A State Title in the 300-meter dash with a time of 40.29 seconds; she was the only runner from a 1A school to finish on the podium in the event. She also won an indoor bronze medal in the 55-meter dash.

In outdoor track, Edwards' time of 55.53 seconds in the 400 meters set a new 1A State Record. She also held the previous record of 56.16 seconds. In addition to her

title in the 400, Edwards won a gold medal in the 200 meters and a bronze medal in

the 4x800-meter relay in her final high school meet.

In her four years at Elkin, Edwards won 11 total state championships, seven state silver medals and four state bronze medals. She won indoor state titles in the 55, 300 and 500-meter runs, and in outdoor she won titles in the 100, 200 and 400-meter runs, as well as the 4x400-meter relay.

Edwards holds conference records in

six events.

Edwards' success extended far beyond the track. She is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society at Surry Community College, is an AP Scholar and was inducted into the National Honor Society with a 4.65 GPA. She is part of the Beta Club, Journalism Club and Interact Club, and is active with the Saint Peter's World Outreach Center. She serves as a youth leader in her community and has taken mission trips to Belize.

She will continue her academic and athletic career at UNC-Chapel Hill.



ELKIN ATHLETICS
Aniya Edwards poses with her 300-meter dash gold medal at the 1A/2A Indoor Track State Championship.



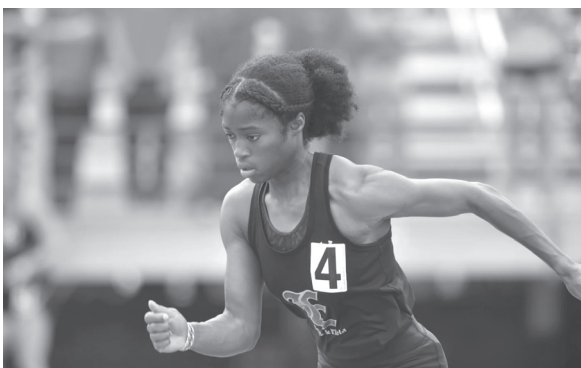
PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Aniya Edwards receives the Best of Preps Premier Student-Athlete Award from Hugh Chatham Health – Orthopedics' Jessica Tulbert, left, and the Elkin Tribune's Holly Lamm, right.



CHARLES LEFTWICH | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Aniya Edwards leaves her opponents in the dust at the 1A State Championship.



CHARLES LEFTWICH | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Aniya Edwards competes in the 1A Outdoor Track State Championship Meet.

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Fisher Leftwich

MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

Fisher Leftwich was a three-sport all-conference athlete in football, basketball and track as a junior.

He was voted Foothills 2A Conference Offensive Player of the Year in football as a split wide receiver and running back. He scored 24 total touchdowns, scored at least once in all 11 games and scored multiple touchdowns in 9-of-11 games.

He racked up 1,014 receiving yards on 51 receptions for an average of nearly 20 yards per reception. He also scored 12 receiving touchdowns.

Leftwich played running back at different points during the regular season

but had to start at the position the last few weeks after the starter went down with an injury. He finished the season with 332 yards and 11 rushing touchdowns on 59 carries.

He also played defensive back, where he grabbed two interceptions – including one pick-6 – and deflected seven passes.

In the winter, Leftwich led North Surry's basketball team to its fourth-consecutive conference championship and conference tournament

championship by averaging 18.7 points, 6.2 rebounds, 1.7 assists and 1.3 steals. He scored in double figures in 27-of-29 games and recorded three double-doubles.

He scored his 1,000th career point as a junior and was named the most outstanding player of the conference tournament. He was also named to the N.C. Basketball Coaches Association All-District Second Team.

Then in the spring, Fisher earned all-conference honors and was a regional qualifier in outdoor track despite nursing a hamstring injury most of the season. He holds the North Surry school record in the 100-meter dash.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS
Fisher Leftwich (3) makes an over-the-shoulder touchdown catch against West Wilkes.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS
North Surry's Fisher Leftwich (3) pulls up for a jump shot over East Surry's JB Davis.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Fisher Leftwich receives the Best of Preps Men's Athlete of the Year Award from Hugh Chatham Health – Orthopedics' Jessica Tulbert, left, and the Elkin Tribune's Holly Lamm, right.



JR WILLOUGHBY PHOTOGRAPHY

North Surry's Fisher Leftwich (3) sprints through East Surry's defense.

SPONSORED BY: **HUGH CHATHAM HEALTH**

Rebecca Amos

FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

South Stokes' senior Rebecca Amos was named the Best of Prep Women's Athlete of the Year following exceptional performances across three sports during the 2024-25 season.

Amos led South Stokes volleyball to its first conference championship since 1992 and first-ever conference tournament title in the school's 60-year history. The Northwest IA All-Conference and All-Tournament selection recorded 248 kills (second on team), 2.8 kills per set, and maintained a team-leading 97.3% serving percentage. Her defensive contributions included 19 solo blocks and 40 total blocks as the



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS
South Stokes senior Rebecca Amos was selected as the Northwest 1A Co-Player of the Year in softball.

team finished 18-6 (11-1 conference) and advanced to the third round of the IA State playoffs.

In basketball, Amos averaged 12 points, 6 assists, 5 rebounds and 2 steals per game, earning Northwest IA All-Conference and All-Tournament honors. She was named conference tournament MVP while leading South Stokes to both regular season and tournament championships—the school's first basketball titles since 1988. The team reached the second

round of the IA State playoffs.

The Winthrop University signee capped her high school career with a stellar softball season, batting .558 with 53

hits, 10 doubles, 3 home runs, 18 RBIs and 41 runs scored. Amos struck out just three times in 86 plate appearances while stealing 32 bases and recording a perfect 1.000 fielding percentage. She was named Northwest IA Co-Conference Player of the Year as South Stokes finished 18-9 overall (9-3 conference), reaching the IA West Regional semifinals.

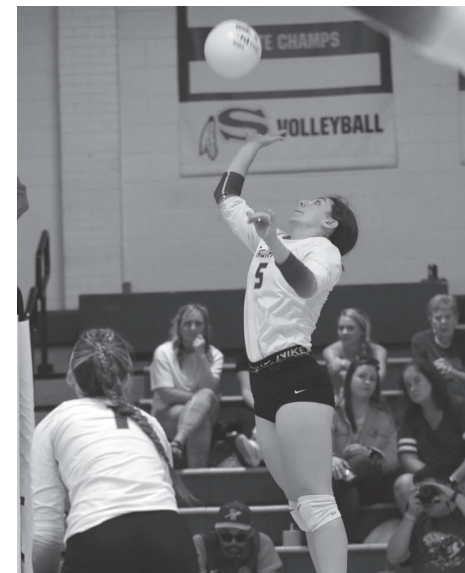


PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

South Stokes' Rebecca Amos receives the Best of Preps Award for Women's Athlete of the Year.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS
South Stokes senior Rebecca Amos is fouled by a Starmount player as she tries to score during the team's last meeting of the regular season.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS
Rebecca Amos (5) helped lead South Stokes to its first volleyball conference championship and conference tournament championship in more than 30 years.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

The Sauras' Rebecca Amos will attend Winthrop University this fall on a softball scholarship.



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Austin Nash

SANDY HURLEY AWARD

WHY HE WON:

The Sandy Hurley Award was handed out for the first time in 2025. The award is named after the former publisher of the Mount Airy Regional Media Group, Sandy Hurley, who played a pivotal role in the Best of Preps Awards since its inception. Sandy led by example by being the first at the office and the last to leave each day. And, many weekends, her car could be found at the Mount Airy News office as she continued working away.

More than a dedicated worker, Sandy was a strong leader, a trusted advisor, a compassionate friend, and a loving wife and mother. She always maintained a positive attitude regardless of the obstacles thrown in her way. Sandy overcame Stage Four Breast Cancer in 2024 but had other health complications leading to her passing in January of this year.

The award recognizes a student-athlete

who personifies hard work, determination, and a relentless pursuit of greatness despite facing heavy adversity. Austin Nash was the unanimous selection.

Austin was adopted by Robbie and Treva Nash when he was 3 years old. When he was six, Austin was diagnosed with Embryonal Rhabdomyosarcoma, or ERMS, which is a rare soft tissue cancer that only has about 350 cases diagnosed each year. ERMS is a recurring cancer, and when he was 16 Austin began his third battle with the disease.

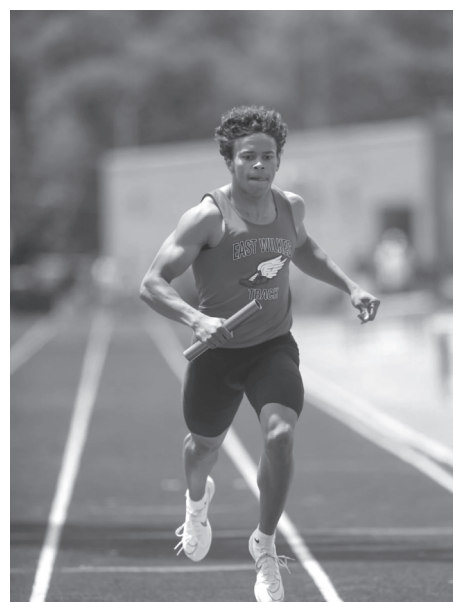
He received chemotherapy through an IV once a week while also taking oral chemo drugs, but he didn't let that slow him down. In his first football game this year, Austin had 205 rushing yards, 83 receiving yards and scored three touchdowns. He finished the year with more than 1,000 total yards, was the team's leading receiver and scored 13 total touchdowns. East Wilkes won 10 games in a season for the first time in a decade.

Austin won three medals at the conference championship for indoor track, then won three more conference medals at the outdoor conference championship. He won a regional championship as part of East Wilkes' 4x200-meter relay team and bronze medals in the 100-meter dash and 4x100-meter relay, then went on to win the 1A State Championship in the 4x200.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Austin Nash receives the Sandy Hurley Award from members of the Hurley family and Holly Lamm. Pictured, from left: Wes Hurley, Holden Hurley, Will Hurley, Nash and Lamm.



CHARLES LEFTWICH | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
Austin Nash runs his leg of the 4x200-meter relay at the 1A Midwest Regional Championship meet.



CHARLES LEFTWICH | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
Austin Nash grins after crossing the finish line to win a state title.



CHARLES LEFTWICH | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Austin Nash runs for a first down in a game at South Stokes.

Molly
Swaim

FEMALE COMMUNITY SERVICE
ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

Molly Swaim sets a positive example through her service to the community as well as her strong character on and off the court.

She provided food and gifts to area families during the holidays as part of the Collide Church Christmas Blessing Store. She reads to students at local elementary schools, cleans up the football stadium after games and helps run concession stands as part of the Beta Club. Swaim has completed numerous volunteer projects through the National Honor Society and passes on her love of sports to the next generation by helping run camps and clinics for volleyball, basketball and softball.

Swaim also led by example and showed the power of determination after breaking her ankle during volleyball season. She worked tirelessly to return to the court for basketball season and suited up for the team's first game. She scored 21 points in the season opener to record her first of 18 double-digit games. Swaim went on to average 14 points per game, was voted Northwest IA Conference Player of the Year, was named to the N.C. Basketball Coaches Association's All-District Third Team, and helped Starmount win a share of the conference title for the first time in more than 30 years.

Swaim transition to softball following basketball, but her season ended prematurely when she was diagnosed with a torn Achilles tendon.



CHARLES LEFTWICH | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
Molly Swaim, right, goes up for a layup while being defended by North Surry's Ava Badgett.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS
Molly Swaim receives the Best of Preps Women's Community Service Award from Holly Lamm.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS
Starmount's Molly Swaim (21) dribbles past Mount Airy's Carrie Marion (25).

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Myles *Knox*

MALE COMMUNITY SERVICE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

West Stokes senior Myles Knox has shown extensive volunteer work while maintaining an impressive athletic career across multiple sports.

Myles, a four-year member and secretary of the Interact Club, has participated in numerous youth mission trips through First Baptist Church. His service includes building wheelchair ramps at Shelby Mission Center, volunteering at King Outreach food pantry, and traveling to Greece where he worked with missionary children at a vacation Bible school.

The multi-sport athlete has also volunteered at the Special Olympics, serving both as a buddy for athletes and as an event timer. Knox has worked with young

athletes at West Stokes summer sports camps as a coach and counselor.

As a member of the National Honor Society, Myles participated in Read Across America, reading to elementary school students. He also volunteered at local apartments in the King area, sharing the Gospel and teaching children football skills.

On the field, Myles excelled in four sports simultaneously. In football, he was named Mid-State 2A Specialist of the Year, converting 47 of 51 extra points and 7 of 11 field goals while helping his team reach the third round of state playoffs with a 10-3 record.

While playing football, Myles also served as goalkeeper for the soccer team, earning All-Conference and All-Region honors with 132 saves. He helped lead the team to its first conference championship in 12 years with a perfect 10-0 conference record.

In basketball, Myles earned All-Conference recognition, averaging 8.9 points, 5.6 rebounds, 3.1 assists and 2.5 steals per game.

Myles competed on the tennis team, where he earned All-Conference honors and won the doubles conference championship with his partner, Peyton Spainhour. The team finished 10-2 and reached the third round of state playoffs. He and Spainhour also qualified for the state doubles tournament after finishing third in regionals.



MICHAEL MULLINS | FOR THE STOKES NEWS
West Stokes' Myles Knox enjoyed a four-year tennis career helping lead the Wildcats to the third round of the state duals this past spring.



MICHAEL MULLINS | FOR THE STOKES NEWS
The Wildcats' Myles Knox makes a diving save during a regular season game this season. Knox was All-Conference, All-County, and All-Region in soccer.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS
The Wildcats' Myles Knox (33) makes an extra-point during the regular season against North Surry. Knox was named the Specialist of the Year in football.



MICHAEL MULLINS | FOR THE STOKES NEWS
West Stokes' Myles Knox (5) brings the basketball up court against South Stokes' Copper Willard (20).



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS
West Stokes' Myles Knox receives the Best of Preps Award for Men's Community Service Athlete of the Year from Bob Ward.



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MYLES KNOX

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Blake *Collins*

MALE COMEBACK ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

Blake Collins was primed for a successful freshman year on Surry Central's wrestling team before tearing his ACL during football season. The injury kept him out of action until the summer of 2024 when he was finally allowed to start training again.

Collins entered the starting lineup in November and won his first seven matches. His regular season was highlighted by a first-place finish in the Big A Memorial Tournament and runner-up finishes in the Danny Linker and Jeff Peal Memorial Tournaments.

Collins only dropped three matches during the regular season, then finished third in the 150-pound weight class at

the Foothills 2A Conference Tournament. Collins went on to reach the 2A Midwest Regional Championship match in the 150 class but fell short of a regional title.

Collins dropped his opening match at the 2A State Tournament, then responded by winning his first consolation match in just 44 seconds. Collins' season came to an end in his next match.

"I couldn't be more proud of him for making it to states with this really being his first season," said Surry Central coach Stephen Priddy. "It's pretty remarkable to come back from that injury and make it to states. It's a testament to all the hard work he's done."

Collins finished the season with a 32-7 record.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

Surry Central's Blake Collins, right, takes down Southwestern Randolph's Nathan Garner in the 150-pound bracket of the 2A State Tournament.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Blake Collins receives the Best of Preps Men's Comeback Athlete of the Year Award from Bob Ward.

Surry Central's Blake Collins, top, earns a near fall against East Surry's Les Adams.

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Comeback Player of the Year

Blake Collins

Surry Central High School

Women's Indoor Track Athlete of the Year

Tasyanna Hughes

Surry Central High School



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SAVANNAH WILSON



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ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**



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Savannah Wilson

FEMALE COMEBACK ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

When Savannah Wilson crumpled to the floor in just the second game of her junior season with a torn ACL, it could have marked the end of her high school basketball career. Instead, it became the beginning of a comeback story that culminated in South Stokes' first conference championship in 36 years.

Wilson, who recently signed with Bridgewater College, returned for her senior season not just as a participant but as a catalyst for the Sauras' historic run. The senior forward averaged 10 points, 7 rebounds, 2 assists and 2 steals per game while leading the team with 10 charges taken — a testament to both her physical recovery and fearless style of play.

"Other than wearing a brace, you could not tell she had gone through what she

had gone through," South Stokes coach Hunter Ford said. "Her first game back she dove on the floor in the first quarter getting tangled up with another player."

Wilson's determination during rehabilitation set the stage for her return. Despite being sidelined, she attended every practice during her junior year, maintaining her connection with the team while focusing on her recovery.

Her leadership helped guide South Stokes to both regular season and tournament championships in the Northwest IA Conference — the program's first titles since 1988. Wilson earned All-Conference, All-Tournament and All-County honors along the way.

The senior's collegiate career will continue at Bridgewater College, where she'll bring the same resilience that defined her final high school season.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS
South Stokes' Savannah Wilson (hands straight up) defends a Mount Airy player as she drives and shoots at the basket.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS
The Sauras' Savannah Wilson shoots a 3-pointer during the 2024-25 basketball season.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS
South Stokes' Savannah Wilson (4) boxes out a North Stokes player for the rebound. Wilson returned to the hardwood after a year of recovery due to ACL surgery.

PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

South Stokes' Savannah Wilson receives the Best of Preps Award for Women's Comeback Athlete of the Year from Bob Ward.



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Nicole Pardue

EXTRA MILE COACH OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

Coach Pardue led Starmount's women's basketball team to its first conference title in more than 30 years.

The Rams began the season 1-5 but played every game against teams from higher divisions. Starmount then hit its stride with an 11-game winning streak. The team went on to finish 15-11 overall and 9-3 in the Northwest 1A Conference after winning just eight total games a season ago.

Pardue's impact extended much farther than the basketball court. She set up several service projects for her players

throughout the year such as reading to the local elementary schools, having guest speakers and meals lined up after Wednesday practices, and helping with the YMCA Christmas Blessings Store each Christmas. Outside of coaching, she serves as assistant athlete director.

From one of her Best of Preps nominations: "Coach Pardue is a key piece in our athletic department that helps with game set-up, scheduling, fundraising, community outreach and so much more. She truly goes the extra mile to help our school, students, coaches and community."



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Nicole Pardue receives the Best of Preps Extra Mile Coach of the Year Award from Bob Ward, left, and Holly Lamm, right.



CHARLES LEFTWICH | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Nicole Pardue talks with the Starmount girls basketball team during a timeout.



CHARLES LEFTWICH | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Nicole Pardue glances at the scoreboard during a home game against North Surry.

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Best of Preps 2025 Winners!**

Men's Wrestling Athlete of the Year

Andrew Meadows

Mount Airy High School

Women's Wrestling Athlete of the Year

Jenevy Olalde

Mount Airy High School



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DJ *Joyce*

FOOTBALL — DEFENSE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

DJ Joyce was a crucial part of Mount Airy's lockdown defense that only allowed nine points per game.

The junior defensive lineman led the state in tackles for a loss with 57 and finished ninth in the state with 19 sacks. He set a new school record for sacks in the MaxPreps era by breaking the record he set as a sophomore (via Mount Airy Sports Historian Doug McDaniel).

Joyce recorded multiple tackles for a loss in 13-of-14 games and had at least five tackles for a loss in seven games. He also recorded multiple sacks in six games.

Joyce was voted Northwest IA Conference Defensive Player of the Year.

Joyce didn't take downs off when the offense was on the field. He was Mount Airy's second-leading rusher with 711 yards and 13 touchdowns on 80 carries.

Joyce was invited to compete in the 2025 Hawaii Tiki Bowl.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

DJ Joyce (22) takes down Starmount quarterback Luke Collins (1).



TABITHA COLLINS | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

DJ Joyce leads Mount Airy's defense to one of its 17 tackles for a loss against North Stokes.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

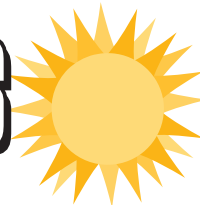
DJ Joyce receives the Best of Preps Football - Defense Award from Samantha Turner.

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Taeshon Martin

FOOTBALL – OFFENSE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

Taeshon Martin carried on Mount Airy’s tradition of strong running backs with an incredible junior season.

Martin ran for 2,379 yards, which ranked No. 2 in the state and No. 46 in the nation. He also scored 41 total touchdowns, which ranked No. 3 in the state and No. 21 in the nation. He averaged nearly 11 yards per carry and more than 171 yards per game.

Martin ran for at least 100 yards in all

14 games this season and surpassed 200 yards three times. He surpassed 200 rushing yards in back-to-back weeks with 240 against Surry Central and 235 against Ashe County, then set another career-high with 251 rushing yards in a playoff win over Starmount.

He scored at least one touchdown in all 14 games and scored multiple touchdowns in all but two games.

Taeshon was named the NCHSAA Athlete of the Month in September.



JIMMY KUHN | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
Mount Airy’s Taeshon Martin crosses into the end zone for one of his four touchdowns against North Surry.



JIMMY KUHN | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
Mount Airy’s Taeshon Martin (4) brushes off a Starmount defender during a Sept. 28 victory.



JIMMY KUHN | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
Taeshon Martin leaves Surry Central’s defense in the dust as he scores one of his five touchdowns for Mount Airy.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS
Taeshon Martin receives the Best of Preps Football – Offense Award from Wendy Bretz of Adams Multimedia.



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**MEN'S BASKETBALL
ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**



BRADY CLARK

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Brady Clark

MEN'S BASKETBALL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

Brady Clark led South Stokes to a 27-3 record and a deep playoff run, establishing himself as one of the region's premier players during the 2024-25 season.

The standout guard was named Northwest IA Player of the Year after averaging 19.7 points, 5.7 rebounds, 6.4 assists, 2.6 steals and 0.8 blocks per game. His all-around performance helped the Sauras secure both the conference regular season and tournament championships for a fourth consecutive season.

Clark scored 591 points on the season, connecting on 149 two-pointers and a district-leading 73 three-pointers. He also shot 73.5% from the free-throw line (74-of-102).

His consistency was remarkable, scoring in double figures in 27 of 30 games, including 10 games with 20 or more points and two 30-point performances. Clark recorded three double-doubles in points and assists and narrowly missed four others by a single assist each time.

The versatile playmaker earned numerous accolades including spots on the Northwest IA All-Tournament Team, First Team All-District II, and Winston-Salem Journal's All-Area Team. South Stokes claimed the sectional championship before falling in the fourth round of the state playoffs.

Clark was also recognized as the All-County Winter Men's Athlete of the Year, capping a standout season for the South Stokes program.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

South Stokes' Brady Clark (22) shoots over a McMichael player early in the 2024-25 season.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

South Stokes' Brady Clark receives the Best of Preps Award for Men's Basketball Athlete of the Year from Bob Ward.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

South Stokes' junior Brady Clark was named the Northwest 1A Boys Basketball Player of the Year.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

The Sauras' Brady Clark (22) scores one of 73 made 3-pointers on the season. The most makes among any District 11 player this past year.

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Angel Ortiz-Osorno

MEN'S SOCCER ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

Angel Ortiz-Osorno helped lead Mount Airy to its first soccer state championship in school history.

Ortiz-Osorno finished his senior season with 38 goals and 25 assists while splitting time between midfield and forward. He either scored or assisted in 24 of the 26 matches in which he competed. He scored at least once in 21 matches and had five hat tricks. He also recorded at least one assist in 14 matches and

recorded multiple assists in six matches.

Ortiz-Osorno finished his career with 108 goals and 42 assists.

Mount Airy finished the season 24-3 and won the school's first-ever IA West Regional Championship and first-ever IA State Championship. Ortiz-Osorno was voted MVP of the state title match by scoring a hat trick in a 4-3 win over Hobpton.

Ortiz-Osorno was voted Northwest IA Conference Offensive Player of the Year and was selected for the N.C. Soccer Coaches Association's IA All-State team.

He will represent Mount Airy at the 2025 East-West All-Star Game.



TABITHA COLLINS | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Angel Ortiz-Osorno lines up for a free kick against Swain County.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Angel Ortiz-Osorno receives the Best of Preps Men's Soccer Award from Samantha Turner.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

Mount Airy players celebrate after Angel Ortiz-Osorno scored the first goal in a 2-0 victory against Ledford.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

Angel Ortiz-Osorno, left, receives the Most Valuable Player trophy following the 1A State Championship Match.



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Colby *Goins*

MEN'S SWIMMING ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

Despite East Surry's home pool being closed during the season, Colby still made the most of his senior season by winning more hardware and returning to the states for the fourth time.

Goins swam in seven events at different points during the regular season: 50-yard freestyle, 100-yard freestyle, 100-yard breaststroke, 200-yard individual medley, 200-yard medley relay, 200-yard freestyle relay and 400-yard freestyle relay. He specialized in the 100 breaststroke and 100 freestyle and made it to the state championship in both events.

Goins won four individual conference titles at the Foothills 2A Conference Championship Meet: 100 freestyle, 100 breaststroke, 200 medley relay and 400 freestyle relay. Throughout his four years at East Surry, Goins won 16 gold medals at conference championships.

Goins medaled in two events at the 2A Central Regional Championship. He finished second in breaststroke with a time of 1:00.55 and third in freestyle with a time of 49.55 seconds. He reached the finals in both events at the state championship, coming in fifth in freestyle at 48.65 and eighth in breaststroke at 1:03.42.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Colby Goins receives the Best of Preps Men's Swimming Award from Surry-Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation's Patsy Carter, left, and Wendy Wood.



CARDINAL ATHLETICS

East Surry's Colby Goins receives a silver medal at the 2A Midwest Regional Championship.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

Colby Goins competes in the 100-yard breaststroke during a 2023 meet at the Armfield Civic Center.



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Merry Parker Boaz

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

Merry Parker Boaz earned all-conference honors and All-District Second Team honors and for her senior season at East Surry.

Boaz averaged 13.7 points, 4.0 rebounds, 1.6 assists and 2.9 steals for the Cardinals. She shot 36% from the field and 81% from the free throw line.

Boaz scored at least 12 points in 18 games, and in such games East Surry had a 17-1 record. She also had 11 games of at least 15 points and five games of at least

20 points. She made at least one 3-pointer in 15 games and hit multiple 3-pointers in nine games.

Boaz scored her 1,000th career point this season and, despite suffering an injury during the conference tournament and missing the postseason, ended her career No. 7 on East Surry’s all-time scoring list.

East Surry finished the season 22-7 overall, with four of those losses coming against the eventual 2A State Runner-up, North Wilkes.



FRANKIE ANDREWS | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Merry Parker Boaz celebrates her 1000th point with future Lady Cardinals



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

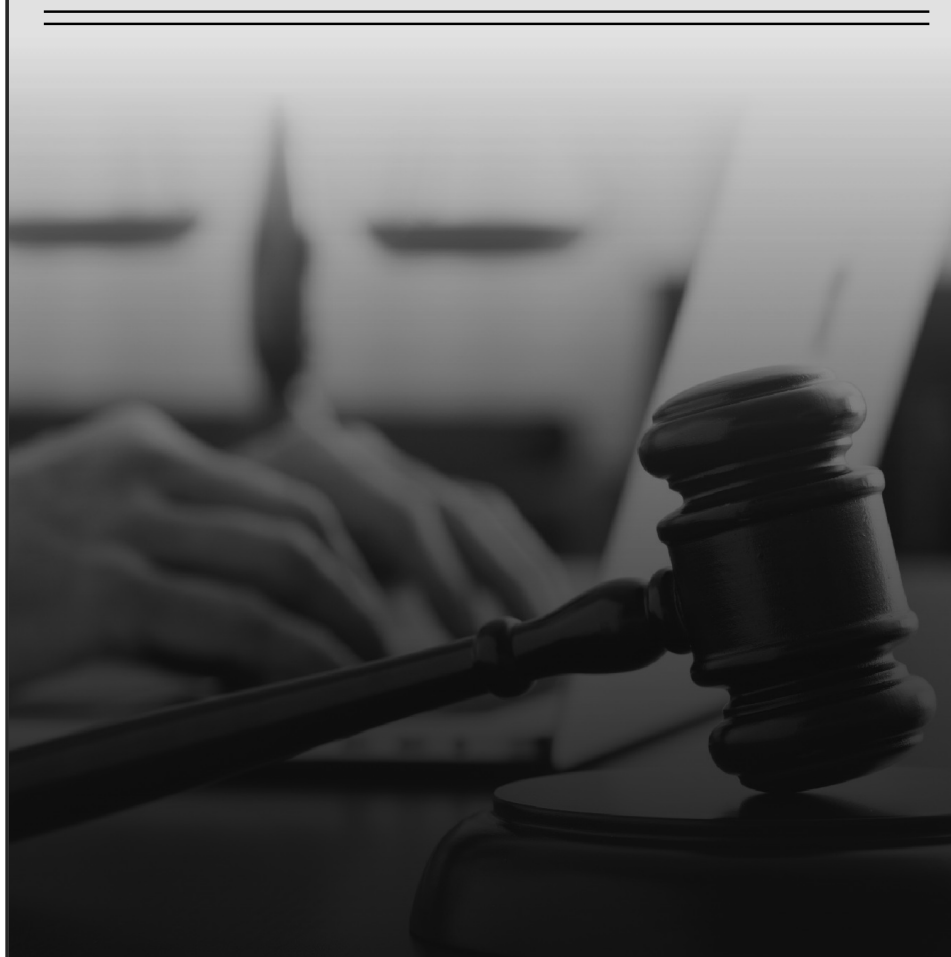
Merry Parker Boaz receives the Best of Preps Women’s Basketball Award from Bob Ward.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

East Surry’s Merry Parker Boaz (5) scores a layup in a home game against Mount Airy.

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FRANKIE ANDREWS | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

East Surry's Merry Parker Boaz releases a 3-point attempt in a game at North Surry.





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Jericho Edwards

MEN'S INDOOR TRACK ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

Jericho Edwards captured four gold medals at the Northwest IA Conference Championship, was named NWIA Men's Athlete of the Year and helped lead Elkin to the NWIA Team Championship.

Individually, he won the 55-meter dash with a time of 6.54 seconds, the 300-meter dash with a time of 36.28 seconds, and tied teammate Lucas Keller for the top spot in the 500-meter run with a time of 1:07.89. Edwards' times in the 300 and 500 set new records for the NWIA Championship meet. He was also part of Elkin's 4x400-meter relay team that set a new conference championship record at

3:35.98, joining teammates Keller, Omar Hurtado and Mason Day.

Edwards competed in three events at the IA/2A State Championship Meet. He partnered with Keller, Day and Henry Sloop to finish third in the 4x400 with a time of 3:33.22; Elkin was the only IA team to finish on the podium in the event.

Individually, Edwards finished sixth in the 300 at 35.86 and seventh in the 55 at 6.62.

In the spring outdoor season, Edwards helped Elkin win another conference championship as a team. He went on to win two silver medals at the state championship as part of the team's 4x400 and 4x800 squads.



ELKIN ATHLETICS

Jericho Edwards, left, and Aniya Edwards are recognized as the Northwest 1A Conference Men's and Women's Athletes of the Year for indoor track.



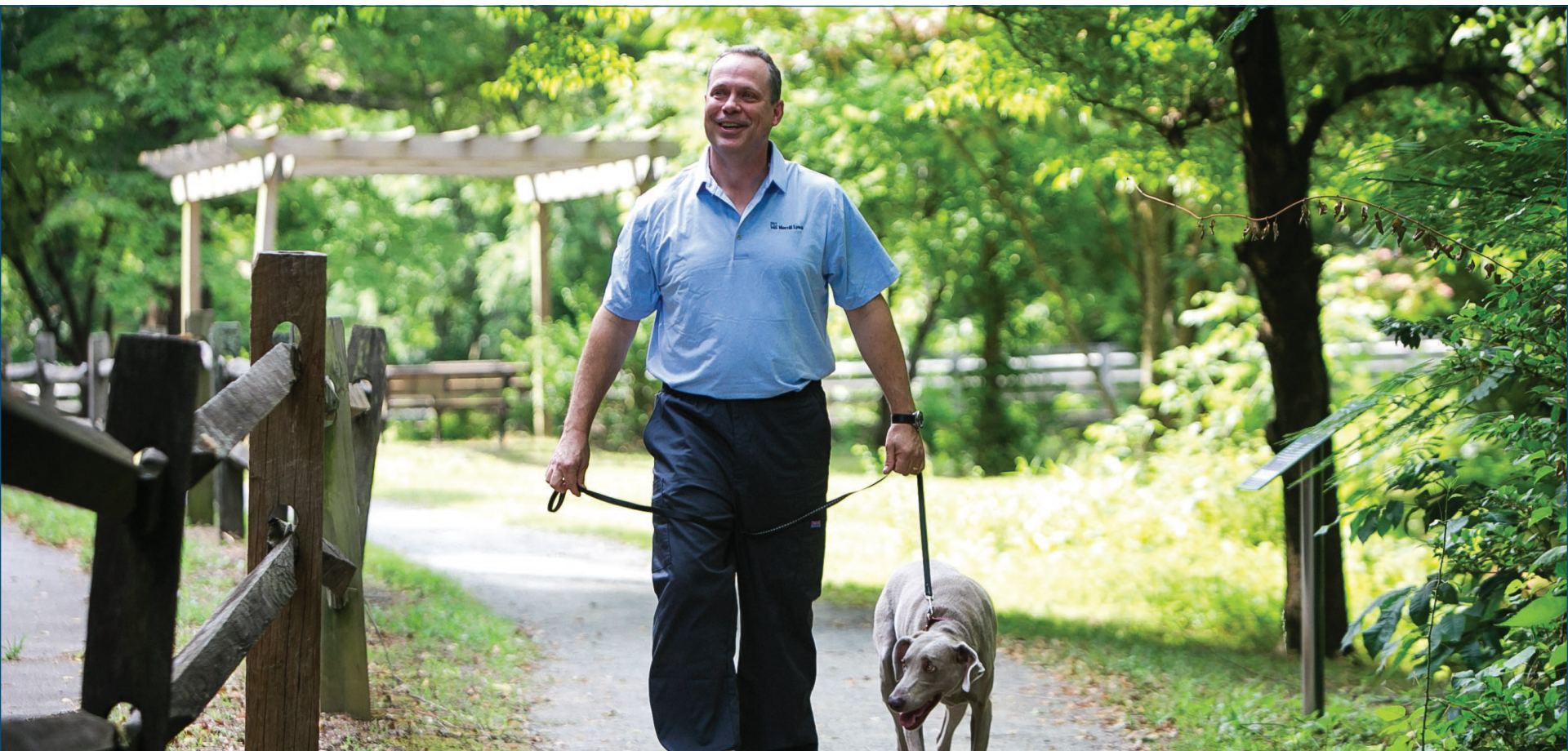
PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Jericho Edwards receives the Best of Preps Men's Indoor Track & Field Award from Holly Lamm.



CHARLES LEFTWICH | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Jericho Edwards competes in his leg of the 4x400-meter relay at the 1A Midwest Regional Championship.



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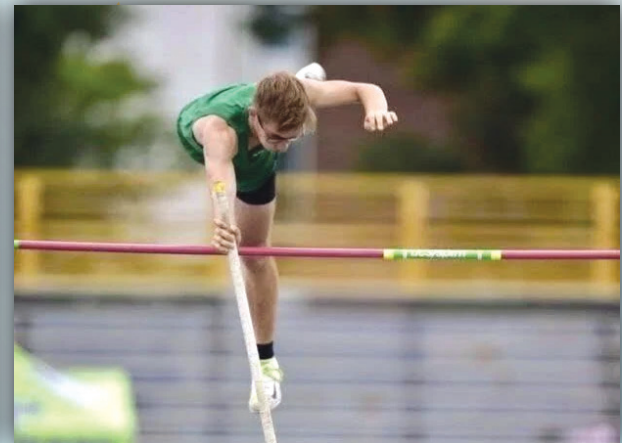
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THE Stokes News

THE CARROLL NEWS

Britt *Berrier*

BASEBALL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

Carroll County senior Britt Berrier recently became just the third player in the more than 50-year history of Carroll County High School baseball to reach 100 career hits. Berrier is the the rare combination of a starting catcher who also doubles as the team's leadoff hitter for the

19-1 Cavaliers. Berrier currently leads the team in hits (31), runs (27) and steals (8 in 9 attempts). Berrier is batting .456 and has a .529 on-base percentage. A four-year varsity starter, Berrier has caught every inning of every varsity game since the start of his freshman season, making just one error over the last two seasons.



Jerry Carter, Founder of OneOfUs.Care, presents the award for Best Baseball Player to Carroll County's Britt Berrier. Looking on are Berrier's father, Chuck (at left) and Carroll County head coach Casey Burcham (right).



Carroll County senior catcher Britt Berrier has caught every inning of every varsity game since the start of his freshman season. He has made just one error over the last two seasons behind home plate.



The rare combination of catcher and leadoff hitter, Carroll County's Britt Berrier slides into home for a run against Glenvar earlier this season.



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Coach Casey Burcham

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William
Bell

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR
OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

Coach Bell worked tirelessly to make athletics at Forbush High School the best they can be. He was instrumental in several athletic upgrades over the years including new scoreboards, soccer stadium seating, a new track and turf football field, a new gym floor, a new auxiliary gym, new sound systems and locker room renovations.

One of the nominations for Coach Bell stated: “No other AD can outwork this man. He is the best athletic director I have ever worked with and puts way more time into

the job than he gets back out of it. He attends events from all sports, organizes gates, volunteers and buses along with all the scheduling and fundraising.”

Another nomination said: “I don’t think he ever goes home. He has to deal with issues from every sport and makes sure they are settled before moving on. He does all of this while coaching baseball and raising a family. Being a teacher and an Athletic Director has to take a toll on a person, but he never shows it in the least bit. He is always here for our students, athletes and coaches.”



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

William Bell receives the Best of Preps Athletic Director of the Year Award from Bob Ward.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

William Bell coaches first base during a 2025 Forbush baseball game.

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Gracelynn Whitt

SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

Gracelynn Whitt helped lead East Wilkes to another successful season on the diamond.

Whitt, a sophomore, nearly tripled her hit total from 2024 by finishing with 57 this season. She batted .587 with a .636 on-base percentage and a 1.033 slugging percentage. Whitt tied for fifth in the state – among all classifications – with 52 runs scored and was ninth in the state with 45 RBIs.

Whitt hammered eight home runs and only struck out six times in 31 games.

Whitt was also a commanding force on defense as the Cardinals' catcher. She

called pitches for the team most of the year and didn't commit a single fielding error all season.

East Wilkes posted a perfect 12-0 record against league opponents to repeat as Northwest IA Conference Champions. The Cardinals also repeated as NWIA Tournament Champions, and Whitt was named conference co-player of the year.

The defending IA State Champions finished the season 25-6 overall. The Cardinals won 22-consecutive games at one point and only suffered two losses to fellow IA teams, both of which came against eventual state champion Union Academy in the IA West Regional Championship.



ZACH COLBURN | THE WATAUGA DEMOCRAT

East Wilkes' Gracelynn Whitt connects on a one-out single in the 1A West Regional Championship.



ZACH COLBURN | THE WATAUGA DEMOCRAT

Gracelynn Whitt drives in a run in a playoff game against South Stokes.



ZACH COLBURN | THE WATAUGA DEMOCRAT

Catcher Gracelynn Whitt, right, protects the plate during a 2023 American Legion softball game.

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LANDIS PRITCHARD



ZEB MATHIS



RYLEY BOWLES



RYLEE TEDDER

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Riley Tuttle

BASEBALL PITCHER OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

West Stokes senior Riley Tuttle capped a remarkable high school baseball career with a dominant final season, earning Mid-State Pitcher of the Year honors while leading the Wildcats to both the Mid-State 2A Conference regular season and tournament championships.

Riley compiled a perfect 9-0 record on the mound with a 1.49 ERA over 47 innings pitched. The senior right-hander struck out 79 batters while issuing just 23 walks, facing 188 batters and allowing only 10

earned runs all season.

At the plate, Riley was equally impressive, batting .422 with a .505 on-base percentage. He collected 13 doubles and one triple while driving in 28 runs and scoring 29 times for the Wildcats.

The All-Conference and All-Tournament selection helped guide West Stokes to a 23-3 overall record, including an undefeated 12-0 mark in Mid-State 2A conference play. The Wildcats' season ended with a loss in the second round of the NCHSAA State 2A Playoffs.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

West Stokes' Riley Tuttle finished 9-0 on the mound this season and was named Mid-State 2A Pitcher of the Year.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

The Wildcats' Riley Tuttle leads off first base. He was one of the team leaders with a .422 batting average.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

West Stokes' Riley Tuttle receives the Best of Preps Award for Baseball Pitcher of the Year from Bob Ward.

SPONSORED BY: **STOKES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Rylee *Tedder*

SOFTBALL PITCHER OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

In her debut season, Rylee Tedder emerged as a dominant two-way player for West Stokes, earning Mid-State 2A Pitcher of the Year honors while leading the Wildcats to a conference championship.

The freshman right-hander compiled a 16-4 record with a 1.49 ERA over 117.1 innings. Tedder struck out 141 batters while walking just 17, holding opponents to a .200 batting average. Her control was particularly impressive in conference play, where she went 8-0 with a microscopic 0.38 ERA and issued only three walks in 37 innings.

Rylee showcased remarkable durability, throwing 14 innings in the Mid-State 2A Tournament championship game despite battling a split finger on her pitching hand. She finished with a perfect 1.000 fielding percentage on 28 chances.

At the plate, Rylee batted .329 with a .424 on-base percentage, collecting 10 doubles, one triple, three home runs and 18 RBIs. She also scored 11 runs despite requiring a courtesy runner as a pitcher.

West Stokes finished 18-6 overall, going undefeated in conference play (12-0) before advancing to the 2A West Regional semifinals.



MICHAEL MULLINS | FOR THE STOKES NEWS
Freshman Rylee Tedder was 16-4 on the mound for the Wildcats earning her Mid-State 2A Pitcher of the Year.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS
West Stokes' Rylee Tedder receives the Best of Preps Award for Softball Pitcher of the Year from Bob Ward.



MICHAEL MULLINS | FOR THE STOKES NEWS
The Wildcats' Rylee Tedder struck out 141 batters with 17 walks and holding her opponents to a .200 batting average.



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ZEB MATHIS



RYLEY BOWLES



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Landis Pritchard

LACROSSE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

West Stokes senior midfielder Landis Pritchard turned in one of the most prolific offensive seasons in school history despite the Wildcats' challenging finish to the 2025 campaign.

Landis tallied 43 goals and 17 assists for a total of 60 points, coming within six goals of tying the school record for most goals in a season. His scoring output ranks as the third-highest single-season total in West Stokes lacrosse history.

The senior standout also collected 35 ground balls while helping the Wildcats to an 8-10 overall record and a 6-6 mark in the 1A/2A/3A Northwest Piedmont/Mid-State/Mid-Piedmont Conference, good for fourth place.

West Stokes' season ended with a first-round loss to Hickory in the NCHSAA 1A/2A/3A State Playoffs.

For his outstanding performance, Landis earned All-Conference and All-County honors. He will attend Mars Hill University on a Lacrosse scholarship in the fall.



MICHAEL MULLINS | FOR THE STOKES NEWS

West Stokes' Landis Pritchard attempts a shot during the 2025 regular season.



MICHAEL MULLINS | FOR THE STOKES NEWS

The Wildcats' Landis Pritchard shoots at the goal against North Davidson. The Mars Hill signee graduated with the third-most goals in school history with 43.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

West Stokes' Landis Pritchard receives the Best of Preps Award for Lacrosse Athlete of the Year from Bob Ward.



SPONSORED BY: **STOKES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Zeb Mathis

MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

West Stokes senior Zeb Mathis capped off a stellar cross country career, earning back-to-back Mid-State 2A Runner of the Year honors after leading the Wildcats to their fourth consecutive conference championship.

Mathis, who finished as the state runner-up in the NCHSAA 2A Championship with a time of 16:07.48, was a driving force behind West Stokes' impressive fourth-place team finish at the state meet.

His championship performance at the 2A Midwest Regional, where he crossed the line in 16:35.82, helped propel the Wildcats to the regional team title.

The standout runner collected All-Conference, All-County, All-Region, and All-State accolades throughout his remarkable senior campaign.

Mathis' leadership and consistency were instrumental in establishing West Stokes as a perennial cross country powerhouse in the Mid-State 2A Conference over the past four years.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

West Stokes' Zeb Mathis receives the Best of Preps Award for Men's Cross Country Athlete of the Year from Bob Ward.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

West Stokes' Zeb Mathis races to a Midwest Regional Championship victory one week after winning the Mid-State 2A Conference Championship.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

West Stokes' Zeb Mathis holds his NCHSAA 2A State Championship runner up trophy along with his All-State certificate.



SPONSORED BY: **STOKES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Ryley Bowles

WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

West Stokes junior Ryley Bowles has established herself as one of the state's premier distance runners this season, collecting multiple accolades while leading the Wildcats to their seventh consecutive conference championship.

Bowles was named Mid-State 2A Runner of the Year for a second consecutive year after posting a personal record time of 20:09.58 in the 3.1 mile race. Her dominance continued at the Mid-State 2A Midwest Regional where she finished as runner-up with a time of 20:39.37.

At the NCHSAA 2A State Championship,

Bowles delivered another strong performance, placing 16th overall with a time of 20:43.11 against the state's top competition.

The standout junior's impressive season earned her All-Conference and All-County honors. Her excellence extended beyond cross country as she was also named Women's Winter All-County Player of the Year and secured a spot on the All-Regional Team.

With her senior season still ahead, Bowles will look to build on her remarkable junior campaign and further cement her legacy in West Stokes' storied cross country program.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS
Ryley Bowles earned her second-consecutive Mid-State 2A Runner of the Year award in 2024 by finishing first at the conference championship.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS
West Stokes' Ryley Bowles receives the Best of Preps Award for Women's Cross Country Athlete of the Year from Bob Ward.



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS
West Stokes' Ryley Bowles finished second at the Midwest Regional Cross Country Championship, and 16th at the state meet.



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Emerson *Puckett*

WOMEN'S GOLF ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

Emerson Puckett made an immediate impact for North Surry as a freshman.

Puckett placed in the top two individually in all nine of North Surry's regular season matches, including seven first-place finishes. She went on to win the title of Foothills 2A Conference Golfer of the Year by 17 strokes. Puckett was the medalist at the FH2A Conference

Tournament by shooting one-under par, which was five strokes ahead of the runner-up.

At the Central Regional Championship, Puckett was the only freshman to finish in the top 10. She tied for fifth with an 18-hole score of 83 strokes (+11) to earn a spot in the state championship match. She went on to finish sixth at the 1A/2A State Championship by shooting 167 (+25) and had the best finish of any freshman.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

North Surry's Emerson Puckett tees off on the fourth hole at Mount Airy Country Club.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Emerson Puckett receives the Best of Preps Women's Golf Award from Bob Ward.



AUDRA JOHNSON | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

North Surry freshman Emerson Puckett, right, is pictured with coach Jonathan Sutphin following the Foothills 2A Conference Championship. Puckett was the medalist at the conference tournament in addition to winning FH2A Golfer of the Year.

SPONSORED BY: **ROYSTER & ROYSTER PLLC**

Pennson *Badgett*

MEN'S GOLF ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

Pennson Badgett has won the Best of Preps Golf Award three years in a row and continues to raise the bar.

In September, Badgett was one of only 12 golfers that traveled to Montreal to represent the United States in the Junior Presidents Cup, which is a two-day, team match-play competition featuring the top 24 Men's golfers between 12-19 years old. Teams were divided into 12 golfers from the United States and 12 from around the world, excluding Europe.

Badgett helped lead Team United States to its fourth Junior President's Cup.

During the high school season, East

Surry won all seven regular season matches in which Badgett competed. He only finished over par once during the regular season, which helped him earn both Foothills 2A Conference Player of the Year Honors as well as the top spot at the conference tournament.

Badgett made it a perfect 3-for-3 at regionals by winning his third 2A Midwest Regional Championship, doing so with a score of four-under par. He went on to finish 2A State Runner-up by shooting an even par in the championship match.

Pennson, who still has one year remaining at East Surry, committed to play golf at the University of Tennessee.



AMERICAN JUNIOR GOLF ASSOCIATION

Pennson Badgett follows through on a drive during a practice round before the Junior Presidents Cup in Montreal.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

East Surry's Pennson Badgett receives the Best of Preps Men's Golf Award from Bob Ward.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

East Surry's Pennson Badgett putts on the fourth green at Mount Airy Country Club.

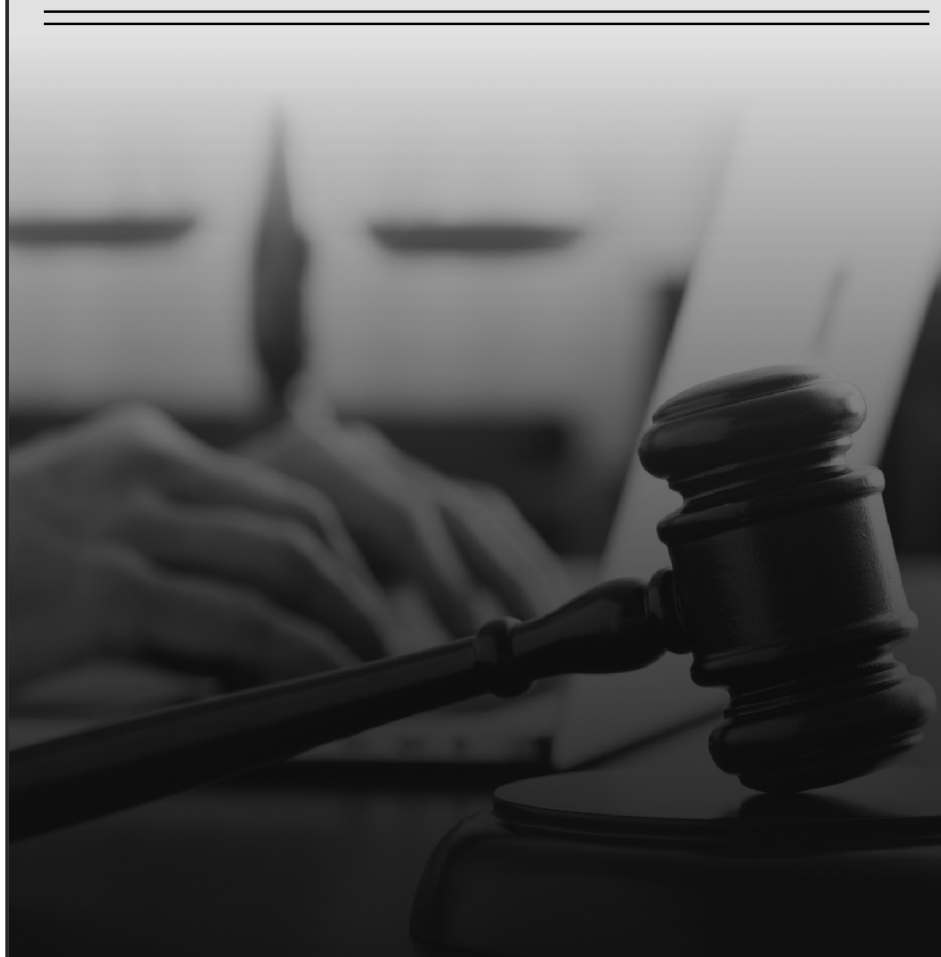


CARDINAL ATHLETICS

Pennson Badgett receives the 2A State Runner-up trophy at Pinehurst No. 6.



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Connor Ballard

MEN'S TENNIS ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

Connor Ballard just completed his junior season and is already a five-time state champion. He added two of those championships this past season.

Connor was the top-ranked player on an Elkin squad that won its third-consecutive dual team state championship. The Buckin' Elks finished the season 18-4 overall, 9-1 in the Northwest IA Conference and only lost one match to a fellow IA team. The Elks are 57-5 overall across the past three seasons.

Connor teamed with his brother Aidan to repeat as doubles state champions. The Ballards went 26-0 as a team, and Connor went 2-0 with partner Reagan Whitley in two regular season matches. Connor hasn't lost a doubles match since 2023.

Individually, Connor went 15-6 in No. 1 singles and only lost two matches to IA opponents; one that won the IA Singles State Title, and another that fell to the Ballards in the IA Doubles State Championship match.

Connor will enter his senior season with an overall record of 122-14.



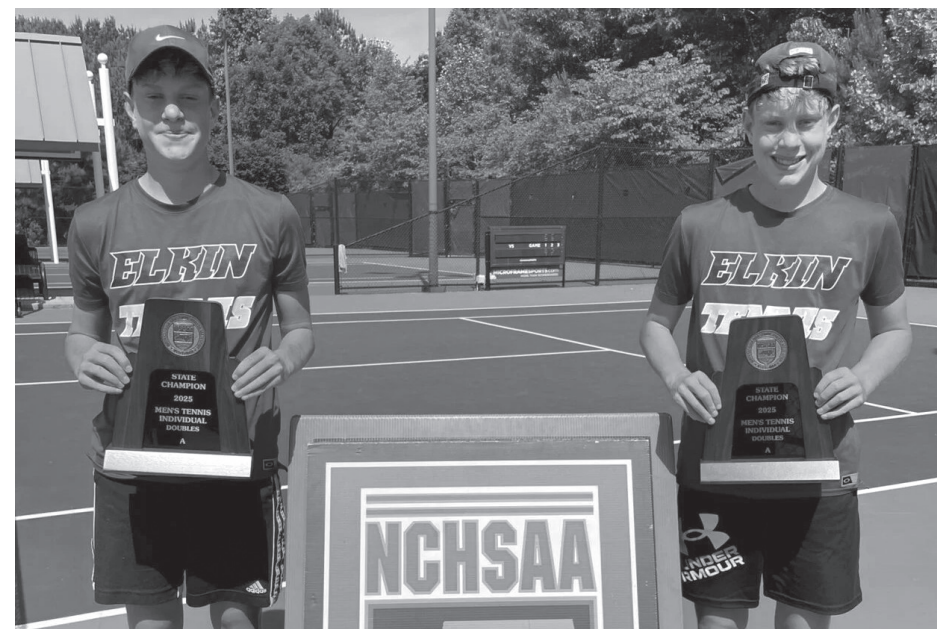
CHARLES LEFTWICH | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Connor Ballard hits a forehand in a singles match against South Stokes.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Connor Ballard receives the Best of Preps Men's Tennis Award from Holly Lamm.



ELKIN ATHLETICS

Connor Ballard, right, and brother Aidan Ballard are pictured with the 2025 1A Doubles State Championship trophies.

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Tasyanna *Hughes*

WOMEN'S INDOOR TRACK ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

Tasyanna Hughes had a record-breaking season for Surry Central. Hughes won a trio of gold medals at the Foothills 2A Conference Championship and was named FH2A Women's Athlete of the Year. She won FH2A Titles in the 55, 300 and 500-meter runs. Her times of 43.80 seconds in the 300 and 1:21.81 in the 500 both set records for the conference championship; she set the school record for the 300 earlier in the season with a time of 43.34 seconds. Hughes also finished first in the 55 at the FH2A Championship with a time of 7.80 seconds.

The Golden Eagle senior went on to finish third at the 1A/2A State Championship in the 300 with a time of 1:19.67, which set a new school record and made her the first Surry Central woman to win an indoor medal in five years. She finished just 1.01 seconds behind the gold medalist. The bronze medal was Hughes' second overall and first as an individual; she won a bronze medal with Central's 4x400-meter relay team at the 2024 Outdoor Championship. Hughes went on to win an outdoor regional title in the 400-meter dash before finishing sixth at the 2A State Championship.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Tasyanna Hughes rounds a corner while competing in the 500-meter dash.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Tasyanna Hughes receives the Best of Preps Women's Indoor Track & Field Award from Bob Ward.



GOLDEN EAGLE ATHLETICS

Tasyanna Hughes is pictured with her bronze medal at the 1A/2A Indoor Track State Championship.

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Women's Golf Athlete of the Year

Emerson Puckett

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David Lee
Williams

MEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK
ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

North Stokes senior David Lee Williams had another exceptional track and field season in 2025. Williams dominated the pole vault competition, capturing championships at the Conference, Midwest Regional and State levels. He consistently cleared 14-0 in all three major competitions. At the Northwest IA Conference meet, Williams' performance helped North

Stokes finish second behind Elkin. He later led his team to a third-place finish among 28 teams at the IA Midwest Regional. Williams capped his high school career at the IA State Championship where North Stokes placed eighth in team standings as he won back-to-back state championships in the pole vault. The standout athlete earned All-Conference and All-County honors in both indoor and outdoor track seasons.



CHARLES LEFTWICH | FOR THE STOKES NEWS
North Stokes' David Lee Williams won his second consecutive outdoor state championship in the pole vault.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS
North Stokes' David Lee Williams receives the Best of Preps Award for Men's Outdoor Track Athlete of the Year from Bob Ward.



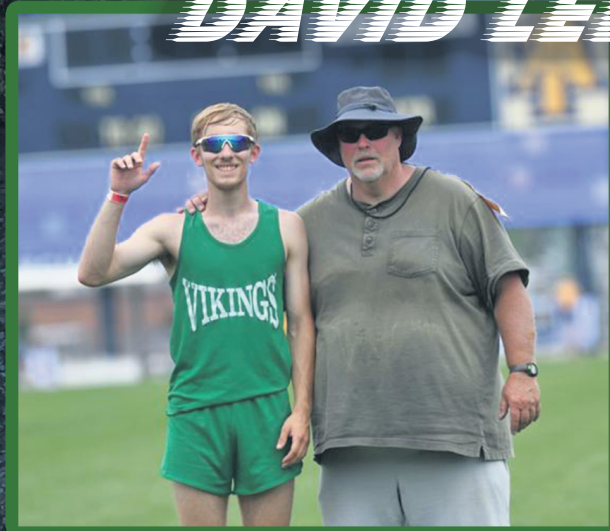
COURTESY PHOTO | FOR THE STOKES NEWS
The Vikings' David Lee Williams shows off his AAU Gold medal.



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Congratulations Men's Outdoor Track Athlete of the Year!

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Andrew Meadows

MEN'S WRESTLING ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY HE WON:

Andrew Meadows captured his second-consecutive individual state title this season by winning the 1A 175-pound championship.

Meadows won undefeated with a perfect 43-0 record during his junior campaign, and only one of his 43 wins wasn't decided by either a pin or forfeit.

At his first tournament of the season, the Hampton Tuttle Invitational, Meadows won the 175 gold medal and wrestled for less than two minutes combined in all of his matches. He only had one individual match go to the second period in his next two tournaments, the Joe Via Invitational and Jerry Hampton Invitational.

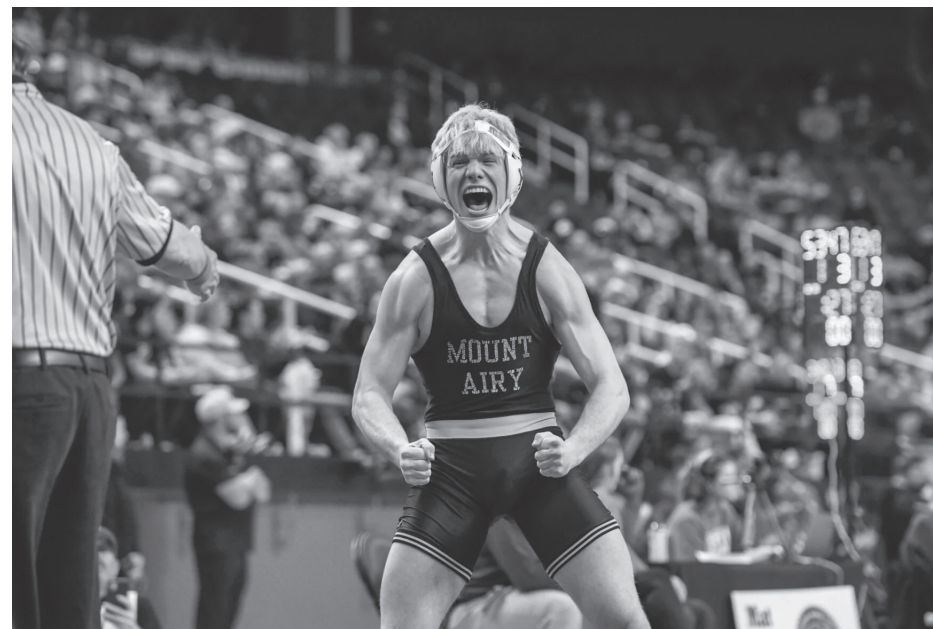
Meadows' dominance carried into dual team competition to help Mount Airy win the Northwest IA Conference

Championship. The Granite Bears then won the program's first IA West Regional Championship in dual team competition before finishing state runner-up. Mount Airy finished the season with a 25-2 dual team record.

Individually, Meadows won the NWIA 175-pound Championship before winning his second-consecutive regional and state championships in the same weight class. He was one of only 17 wrestlers in North Carolina – among all classifications – to repeat as state champion. His individual state championship also helped Mount Airy secure the team title at states.

Meadows is the fourth wrestler in Mount Airy school history to win multiple state titles and the third to win a state championship with an undefeated record.

Meadows enters his senior year with a career record of 129-10.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

Andrew Meadows celebrates after winning the 1A 175-pound State Championship.

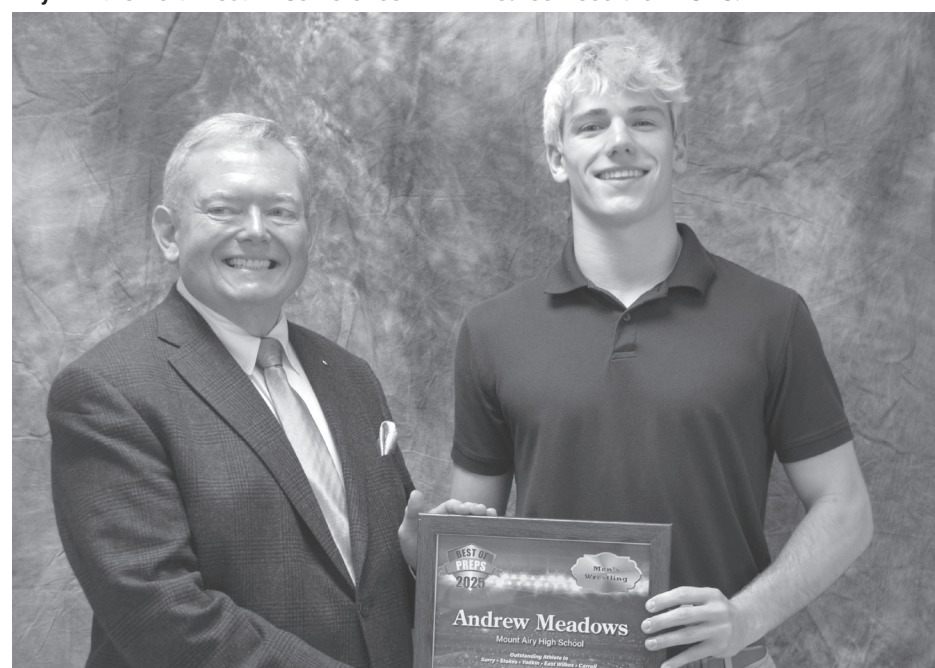
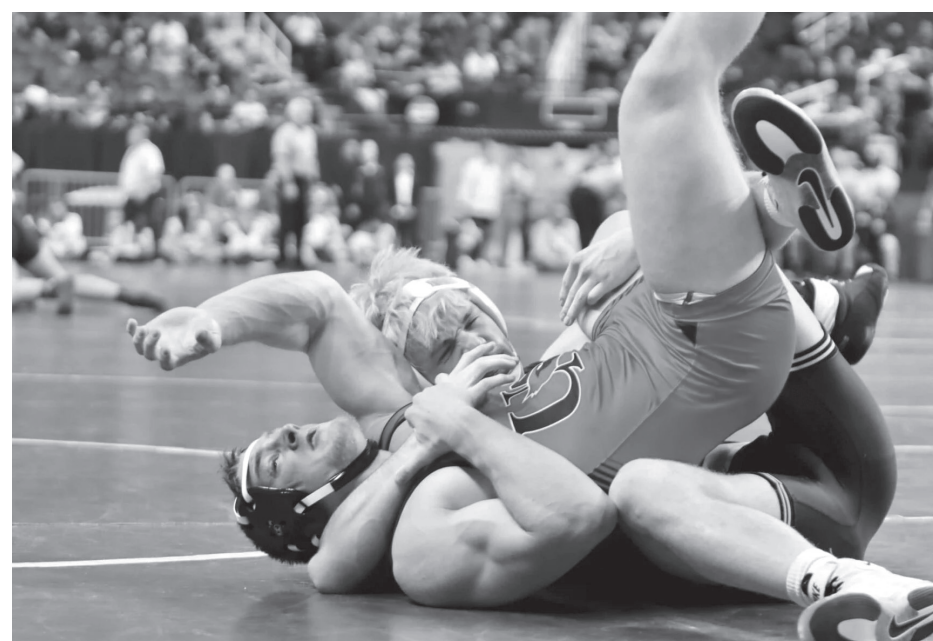


PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Andrew Meadows receives the Best of Preps Men's Wrestling Award from Bob Ward.



BARBI MANCHESTER | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Mount Airy's Andrew Meadows, back, captures his second 1A State Championship by pinning Union Academy's Elijah Williams.

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Best of Preps 2025 Winners!**

Men's Wrestling Athlete of the Year

Andrew Meadows

Mount Airy High School

Women's Wrestling Athlete of the Year

Jenevy Olalde

Mount Airy High School



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Jenevy Olalde

WOMEN'S WRESTLING ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

There were points during her junior campaign that Jenevy Olalde wasn't even sure she'd be physically able to wrestle in the postseason due to an injury. Despite wrestling most of the season with a metal plate in her foot, Olalde went on to compete in the 100-pound State Championship match and finished runner-up.

Olalde pulled double duty and wrestled for both the men's and women's teams early on. She competed in 11 matches in the men's 106-pound division during the regular season and won nine. On the women's side, Olalde won her first 22 matches before falling short in the state title match.

Olalde won the Northwest IA Conference Championship match in just 24 seconds. She went on to the Women's Midwest Regional Championship and won her first three matches via fall before taking the title with a 6-0 decision; Olalde outscored her opponents 31-0 at regionals. Olalde was the only wrestler from a IA school to win a Midwest Regional Championship and one of only three IA wrestlers to finish on the podium.

At states, Olalde won her opening match in just 54 seconds then went up 15-3 in the quarterfinals before earning the pin. She battled back from a 3-0 deficit in the semifinals to win via fall in the second period, then lost the championship match 14-2.



BARBI MANCHESTER | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Jenevy Olalde traps Hoke County's Azya Monroe in the semifinals of the women's 100-pound state tournament.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Jenevy Olalde receives the Best of Preps Women's Wrestling Award from Bob Ward.



TABITHA COLLINS | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Jenevy Olalde, left, locks up with Corinth Holders' Anna Ockerman in the Women's 100-pound State Championship match.

*Congratulations to
all area Athletes!!*



*From all of us at the
The Mount Airy News*

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Carrie *Marion*

WOMEN'S TENNIS ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

Carrie Marion capped off an incredible tennis career by winning a doubles state championship her senior year.

Marion won the doubles state title alongside Audrey Brown. Marion and Brown finished the season 15-0 as a doubles team, and Marion finished 24-2 in doubles overall as a senior. In singles, Marion went 20-2 and only lost to the eventual IA Singles State Champion.

Marion also led Mount Airy to a 19-3 dual team record and a 12-0 record in the Northwest IA Conference. The Granite

Bears won their fourth-consecutive NWIA Conference Championship and reached the IA West Regional Championship before falling to the eventual State Champion, Bishop McGuinness. During Marion's four years, Mount Airy was 87-4 in dual team competition.

Marion finished her career with six state championship rings: three-consecutive dual team state championships 2021-23, two doubles championships in 2021 and 2024, and one singles championship in 2022.

She graduated with an overall record of 177-17.



JIMMY KUHN | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Carrie Marion hits a forehand against North Stokes.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

Carrie Marion hits a backhand in the No. 1 singles match against East Wilkes.



WALTER BURNEY | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Mount Airy's Carrie Marion, left, and Audrey Brown, middle, are pictured with coach Luke Graham after winning the 1A Doubles State Championship.

*Congrats
to all area
Athletes!!*



From all of us at the
**THE
Stokes News**

CONGRATULATIONS ATHLETES!



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Ella Riggs

WOMEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

A state title in the 2025 2A Outdoor Track State Championship made Ella Riggs the most decorated Women's track athlete in North Surry history.

Riggs won the Shot Put State Championship with a mark of 41 feet and 3.25 inches. She won the event by more than two feet, with R-S Central's Alena Jimerson taking second at 39-1.75, East Duplin's Jamyah Pickett took third at 36-7.5, while TW Andrews' Journie Barr rounded out the podium at 36-1.

Riggs also finished state runner-up in discus throw with a mark of 125-7. She and R-S Central's Jimerson swapped places from shot put as Jimerson won the state championship with a mark of 126-9.

Riggs joined Alex Cooke as the only North Surry women to win multiple outdoor track state championships; Cooke won the 2A Shot Put titles in 2013-14.

Her recent state title put Riggs ahead of Cooke in total state championships. Riggs first won the outdoor shot put championship in 2023, then won the indoor shot put titles in 2024-25 before capping her career off with this latest championship.

Jared Hiatt, a 2023 graduate, is the only other North Surry athlete to win four track state championships.

Riggs graduated with 10 total state medals in high school – four in indoor track and six in outdoor. She will continue her track career at Gardner-Webb University.



GREYHOUND ATHLETICS

North Surry senior Ella Riggs stands on top of the podium at Marcus T. Johnson Track after winning the 2A Shot Put State Championship.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Ella Riggs receives the Best of Preps Women's Outdoor Track & Field Award from Holly Lamm.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

Ella Riggs competes in the finals of the 2A Shot Put State Championship back in 2023, which led to her first of four shot put state titles.



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Addison *Goins*

WOMEN'S SOCCER ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

Addison Goins made the most of her senior season after being sidelined with an injury her junior year.

Goins scored nine goals through three matches in 2024 before suffering a torn ACL and a torn meniscus. The injury took away her junior season at East Surry, her senior club season with Piedmont Triad Football Club and her senior season of cross country.

Goins looked like she never missed a step when she returned to the field in

the spring of 2025. She set East Surry's single-season scoring record with 33 goals in 19 matches. She scored six hat tricks and either scored or assisted on nearly 70% of East Surry's goals. The Cardinals were 13-1-1 when Addison scored and 0-4 when she didn't.

East Surry tied a school record with 13 wins and competed in the 2A State Playoffs.

Goins graduated with 81 career goals. She will continue her soccer career at Brevard College.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

Addison Goins dribbles through Forbush's defense in a first-round playoff match.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

Addison Goins takes a free kick during an East Surry home match.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Addison Goins receives the Best of Preps Women's Soccer Award from Surry-Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation's Patsy Carter, left, and Wendy Wood.



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Claire Hull

WOMEN'S SWIMMING ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

Claire Hull had success at every level during her final lap as a Cardinal. She helped lead East Surry to a third-consecutive Foothills 2A Conference Team Championship even though the Cardinals weren't able to swim in their home pool. Hull was named FH2A Women's Swimmer of the Year and won four gold medals at the conference meet, doing so in the 100-yard breaststroke, 200-yard individual medley, 200-yard medley relay and 400-yard freestyle relay.

Hull and the Cardinals' 400 free relay team captured Surry County's only regional championship. The squad of

Hull, Ashlyn Comer, Kynlee Venable and Kennedy Cook won the event with a time of 3:57.74. Hull added a regional runner-up finish in the 100 breaststroke at 1:11.07 and a third-place finish in the 200 individual medley at 2:18.85. She landed one spot off the podium as part of the 200 medley relay team.

The Cards went on to finish third in the 400 freestyle relay with a time of 3:51.23. Hull reached in two of her other three events as well. She finished seventh in the 200 medley relay with a time of 1:59.30 and seventh in the 200 individual medley with a time of 2:17.22.

She will continue her swimming career at Campbell University.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

East Surry's Claire Hull competes in the girls 100-yard breaststroke during a 2023 home meet.



PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Claire Hull receives the Best of Preps Women's Swimming Award from Bob Ward.



CARDINAL ATHLETICS

Claire Hull is pictured after being named Foothills 2A Conference Swimmer of the Year.

Congratulations To All the Winners of the 2025 BEST OF PREPS



Claire Hull

Women's Swimming
Athlete of the Year
East Surry High School



Merry Parker Boaz

Women's Basketball
Athlete of the Year
East Surry High School



Pennson Badgett

Men's Golf
Athlete of the Year
East Surry High School

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Maggy Sechrist

VOLLEYBALL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

Maggy Sechrist helped lead a high-powered East Surry offense that surpassed 20 wins for the eighth time in nine years.

East Surry graduated five seniors from its 2023 team that went 25-3. Three of the graduates went on to play collegiate volleyball, and all five played key roles for the Cardinals for multiple seasons.

Sechrist was one of the veteran players that stepped up to uphold East Surry's volleyball tradition in 2024. The junior outside hitter ranked 17th in the state

with 411 kills and did so with a 37.5 kill percentage. She also ranked 10th in the state with 493 digs and converted nearly 95% of her serves.

Sechrist was named to both the all-conference and all-tournament teams.

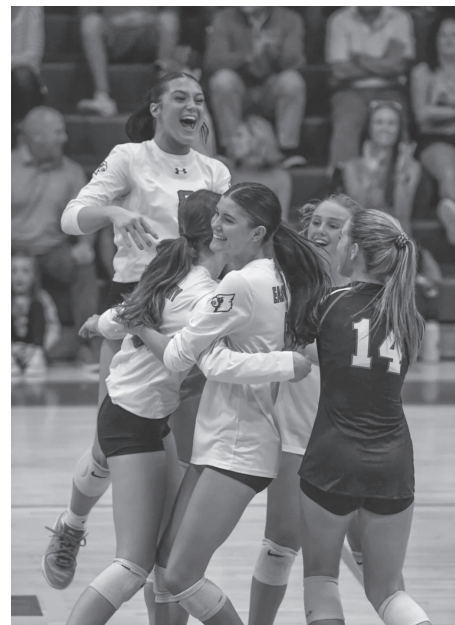
East Surry captured its fourth-consecutive Foothills 2A Conference Championship in 2024. The Cardinals also reached the Sweet 16 of the state playoffs for an 11th-consecutive season.

The Cardinals finished the year 21-5. Of the 21 wins, 19 were decided by 3-0 margins.



CHARLES LEFTWICH | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

East Surry's Maggy Sechrist records one of her match-high 17 kills against Mount Airy.



CORY SMITH | THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

Maggy Sechrist is mauled by teammates following a kill against North Surry.



CHARLES LEFTWICH | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

East Surry's Maggy Sechrist hits an attack during the first set.

PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Maggy Sechrist receives the Best of Preps Volleyball Award from Holly Lamm.



SPONSORED BY: **ONEOFUS.CARE**

Sydney *Reece*

CHEERLEADING ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

WHY SHE WON:

Carroll County's Sydney Reece has cheered during football and basketball seasons since the 7th grade. She was a team captain for the Cavaliers this year and is a 2-time All-American cheerleader by UCA. She graduated with a 4.2 GPA and was also involved in "Help Save the Next Girl Club" and is a member of the National

Honor Society. Sydney stands out for her exceptional talent, leadership skills, and all around great personality. Sydney embodies all the characteristics of a great cheerleader - she is determined, dynamic in her skills as she has experience in being a flyer and base, tumbling, and is a positive role model for her team, school, and community.



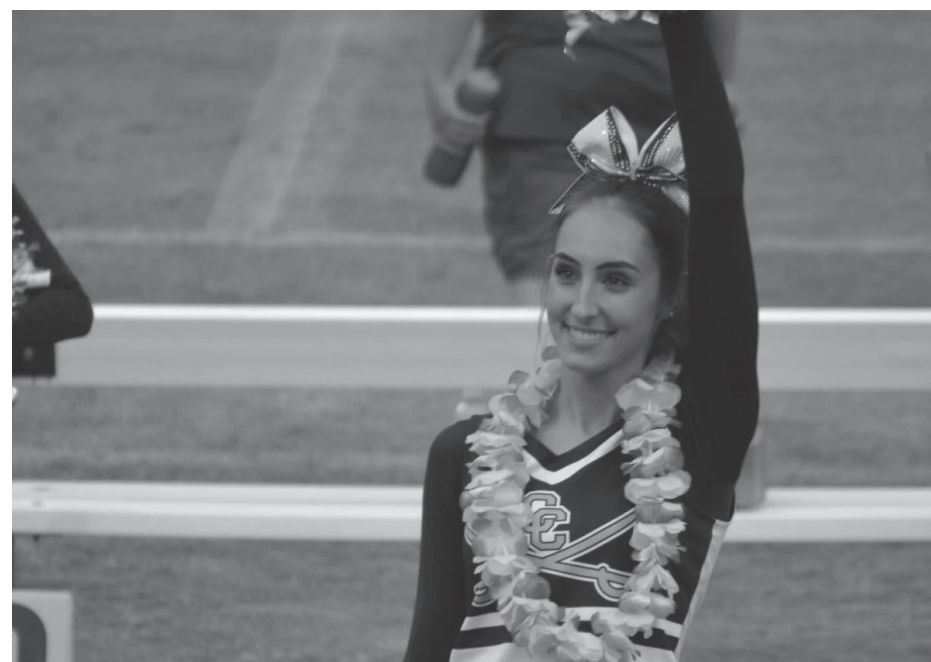
PHOTO BY KATELYN GOINS

Carroll County's Sydney Reece receives the Best of Preps Award for Cheerleading Athlete of the Year from Allen Worrell.



CHARLES LEFTWICH | FOR THE STOKES NEWS

Carroll County's Sydney Reece has cheered during football and basketball seasons since the 7th grade. She was a team captain for the Cavaliers this year and is a 2-time All-American cheerleader by UCA.



Carroll County's Sydney Reece stands out for her exceptional talent, leadership skills, and all around great personality.

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