



NEWS RELEASE

NFHS, NIAAAA to Hold 51st National Athletic Directors Conference in Virtual Format

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bruce Howard

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (October 12, 2020) — The annual National Athletic Directors Conference (NADC), co-sponsored by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAAA), will be conducted in a virtual format Monday, December 7, through Monday, December 14. The conference will take place virtually for the first time in its 51-year history in lieu of the in-person event originally set for Tampa, Florida.

Although adapting the conference to the virtual realm is far from ideal, and the loss of live human interaction cannot be remedied, the leaders of the two organizations said there are some benefits to a virtual event that would not be available with the standard conference. Streaming workshops, meetings and exhibit show sessions online will allow them to be viewed by a much larger audience – an audience that will also be able to watch any session on-demand.

“We’re looking at it as an opportunity to reach out to individuals who perhaps have never experienced the NADC before and this can serve as an introduction for them,” said Mike Blackburn, executive director of the NIAAAA. “We can provide members with an opportunity to take part without traveling. The other aspect of it is that the sessions within our virtual national conference will be recorded. So, even though this is occurring without athletic administrators on-site, they may be continuing to work in their schools and school districts. And if they miss a portion of it due to

responsibilities, they can go back and take that in. We are thankful for technology that allows for this outreach to directors of athletics.”

“We are thrilled and grateful to help provide this professional development opportunity for our country’s athletic directors,” said Karissa Niehoff, NFHS executive director. “With everything we all have been through with regard to the pandemic, we felt it was imperative we make this event happen in some capacity. We wanted to give athletic administrators a chance to improve their craft, and to learn valuable techniques for navigating the unprecedented challenges they face currently.”

In addition to being moved online, the conference has been expanded from its typical five-day schedule to an eight-day slate that will include four days of NIAAA leadership training courses to begin the festivities.

“We’ve taken a normal, five-day on-site conference and have adjusted it to try to keep all of the aspects of the conference in place that we can,” Blackburn said. “We have added four days of leadership training courses at the beginning, so, on those days, there will be 12 courses taught for our athletic administrators to participate in.”

During the opening four-day stretch of virtual leadership training courses presented by the NIAAA Leadership Training Institute, one 900-level course will be taught each day from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. EST – LTC 901, LTC 902, LTC 903 and LTC 904, respectively – while four different combinations of 500-, 600- and 700-level courses will be showcased from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Attendee Orientation Session will kick off the second phase of the conference at 2 p.m. Friday, December 11, followed by the first of six hour-long workshop sessions that will be held throughout the final four days of the NADC.

At 5 p.m. on Friday, December 11, **Tony Dungy** will be featured as the conference’s Opening General Session speaker. A former National Football League (NFL) player and coach with 31 total seasons of experience, Dungy is now an analyst for NBC’s Football Night in America, as well as a spokesman for All-Pro Dad, a national fatherhood program. In 13 seasons as an NFL head coach, Dungy posted a 139-69 career record and made the postseason 10 times, culminating with a victory in Super Bowl XLI as the coach of the Indianapolis Colts in 2007. In 2010, following his retirement, the Colts organization added Dungy to its Ring of Honor.

In addition to his storied NFL career, Dungy has authored six books, including “Quiet Strength: The Principles, Practices, and Priorities of a Winning Life,” which sold more than 1 million print copies

and reached No. 1 in the hardcover nonfiction section of *The New York Times* Best Seller list. Dungy previously served on the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation as an appointee of George W. Bush and has been active with many community service organizations in the Indianapolis and Tampa Bay areas; among them are the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Athletes in Action and the Basket of Hope program at Indianapolis' Riley Hospital for Children.

Derrick Brooks will conclude the 2020 NADC as the speaker for the Closing General Session at 4:20 p.m. on December 14. One of the greatest high school football players in Florida history, Brooks was named 1990 National Defensive Player of the Year and to multiple all-America teams as a star linebacker at Booker T. Washington High School in Pensacola. Those accolades earned him a place in the NFHS' National High School Hall of Fame in 2019, the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) Hall of Fame in 2015 and to the FHSAA All-Century Team. A shining example of a student-athlete, Brooks went on to be a three-time All-Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) First Team selection, two-time consensus All-American and a two-time Academic All-American at Florida State University, a resume that later earned him an NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship.

Toward the end of his outstanding 14-year National Football League (NFL) career with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers – one that saw him named to six NFL All-Pro teams, 2002 NFL Defensive Player of the Year and a champion of Super Bowl XXXVII – Brooks realized a lifelong dream in 2007 when he partnered with Eddie DeBartolo to open Brooks DeBartolo Collegiate High School in North Tampa. Since retiring from the NFL, Brooks has made it his life's mission to positively impact the lives of young people in the Tampa Bay area.

For registration instructions and a complete schedule of conference meetings, workshops and exhibit show sessions, please visit: <https://www.adconference.org>.

Due to the virtual setting, award winners and NIAAA Hall of Fame inductees slated to be honored at the 2020 NADC will be formally recognized at the 2021 conference in Denver, Colorado.

The eight individuals being honored with 2020 NFHS Citations are **Susan Robbins**, CMAA, athletic director, Gray-New Gloucester (Maine) High School; **Joe Kimling**, CAA, athletic director and dean of students, Madeira (Ohio) City Schools; **Russell Wambles**, CMAA, former athletic director, Apopka (Florida) High School and Orlando (Florida) Dr. Phillips High School; **Matthew Hensley**, CMAA, assistant principal, Mahomet-Seymour (Illinois) Community Schools; **William Fitzgerald**, CMAA, retired activities director and assistant principal, Fremont (Nebraska) High School; **Paige Hershey**, CMAA,

executive director of athletics, Spring Branch Independent School District, Houston, Texas; **Mike Hunter**, CMAA, athletic director, Provo (Utah) High School; and **Tol Gropp**, CMAA, athletic director, Boise (Idaho) Timberline High School.

Ten others will receive NIAAA Bruce D. Whitehead Distinguished Service Awards including **Todd Livingston**, CMAA, athletic administrator, South Portland (Maine) High School; **David Suiter**, CMAA, retired director of athletics and student activities, Salem City School District, Mannington, New Jersey; **Joe Thomson**, CMAA, assistant director of athletics, Wilmington (Delaware) Friends School; **Bob Stratton**, CAA, former athletic administrator and current executive director of the Virginia Interscholastic Athletic Association, Glen Allen, Virginia; **Daniel Armstrong**, CMAA, director of athletics, Kokomo (Indiana) Northwestern High School; **Peggy Seegers-Braun**, CMAA, athletic director, Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Divine Savior Holy Angels High School; **Steve Throne**, CMAA, director of athletics and activities, Omaha (Nebraska) Millard South High School; **Johnny Johnson**, CMAA, athletic director, Russellville (Arkansas) School District; **Tim Sam**, CMAA, assistant principal and athletic director, Grants Pass (Oregon) North Valley High School; and **Scott Nordi**, CAA, former athletic director, Tacoma (Washington) Lakes High School.

Additionally, **Mike Ellson**, CMAA, athletic director at Christ Presbyterian Academy in Nashville, Tennessee, is the winner of the NIAAA Frank Kovalski Professional Development Award; **Peg Pennepacker**, CAA, a retired assistant principal and athletic director and current Title IX compliance and education consultant from Red Hill, Pennsylvania, is the recipient of the NIAAA Thomas E. Frederick Award of Excellence; and **Mark Armstrong**, CMAA, activities director for Lincoln Southwest High School in Lincoln, Nebraska, will be honored with the NIAAA Award of Merit, the association's highest individual award.

The 2020 class of NIAAA Hall of Fame inductees consists of seven former athletic administrators, including **Arthur Ballard**, CAA, retired athletic administrator, Irvine (Kentucky) Estill County Schools; **David Bell**, CMAA, retired athletic administrator, Zanesville (Ohio) City Schools; **Douglas Killgore**, CMAA, retired assistant principal and athletic administrator, Central Arkansas Christian School, North Little Rock, Arkansas; **James Rolfes**, retired athletic administrator, Springfield (Ohio) North High School; **Richard Maher**, retired athletic administrator, Sturgis (Michigan) High School; **Thomas Crist**, retired athletic administrator, Kendallville (Indiana) East Noble High School; and

Tracy Leinen, CMAA, retired athletic administrator, Boise (Idaho) High School and retired executive director of the Idaho Athletic Administrators Association.

This press release was written by Nate Perry, coordinator of media relations at the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

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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 performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing 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 19,500 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

About the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA)

The NIAAA is the professional organization for interscholastic athletic administrators that is accredited by Cognia. Based in Indianapolis, Indiana, the NIAAA's mission is to provide professional development options for directors of athletics, and to enhance the athletic administration profession. Since 1977, the NIAAA has served those who lead education-based athletic programs in the nation's schools. With current individual membership of over 13,000, the NIAAA consists of member state athletic administrator associations in the 50 states, and the District of Columbia, as well as internationally. Including a 52-course Leadership Training curriculum, six levels of certification, and leadership opportunities the NIAAA is the professions leader in assisting athletic administrators, directors, coordinators, and supervisors, as well as those serving in assistant principal/athletic director, or activity/athletic director combined roles that lead school-based sports programs. While also providing networking and exchange of idea, the NIAAA places emphasis on student safety and participation opportunities. The association focuses on evaluating best-practices, providing practical resources and methods of recognition. NIAAA champions the profession of athletic administration through education opportunities, advocating ethics, developing leaders and fostering community. For more information, visit the NIAAA website at www.niaaa.org.

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