

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

**Four Former Athletes, Five Top Coaches  
Headline 2017 Class of National High School Hall of Fame**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (March 1, 2017) — Four former high school athletes, including New York Yankees' star **Bobby Richardson** of South Carolina and record-setting softball pitcher **Lisa Fernandez** of California, along with five of the winningest coaches in high school history, are among 11 individuals selected for the 2017 class of the National High School Hall of Fame administered by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

Richardson was a baseball and basketball standout at Edmunds High School in Sumter, South Carolina, in the early 1950s before winning three World Series with the Yankees. Fernandez posted a remarkable 0.07 career earned-run average in softball during her days at St. Joseph's High School in Lakewood, California.

Other athletes who were chosen for this year's class are **Joe Dial**, who set a national record in the pole vault in 1981 as a senior at Marlow (Oklahoma) High School; and **Melissa (Missy) West**, a three-sport standout (basketball, softball, soccer) at Franklin Academy in Malone, New York, who later played basketball at Duke University.

**Russ Cozart**, who has posted a remarkable 647-6 dual-meet record in 42 years as wrestling coach at Brandon (Florida) High School, is one of five coaches selected for the 2017 class. Other coaches who will be honored this year are **Joe Lombard**, girls basketball coach at

Canyon (Texas) High School who ranks second nationally in career coaching victories; **Steve Shondell**, who won almost 1,200 matches and 21 state titles in 34 years as volleyball coach at Muncie (Indiana) Burriss High School; **Bernie Walter**, who won 10 state titles in 36 years as baseball coach at Arundel High School in Gambrills, Maryland; and **Jerry Winterton**, who had a 621-16 record in 30 years as wrestling coach at Cary (North Carolina) High School.

The other two members of the 2017 class are **Bill Laude**, a football, basketball and baseball official from Frankfort, Illinois, and **Rick Wulkow**, who had significant contributions to high school sports during his 35 years with the Iowa High School Athletic Association.

These five athletes, five coaches, one administrator and one contest official will be inducted into the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) National High School Hall of Fame July 2 at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence, Rhode Island. The 35<sup>th</sup> Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony will be the closing event of the 98<sup>th</sup> annual NFHS Summer Meeting.

The National High School Hall of Fame was started in 1982 by the NFHS to honor high school athletes, coaches, contest officials, administrators, performing arts coaches/directors and others for their extraordinary achievements and accomplishments in high school sports and performing arts programs. This year's class increases the number of individuals in the Hall of Fame to 458.

The 11 individuals were chosen after a two-level selection process involving a screening committee composed of active high school state association administrators, coaches and officials, and a final selection committee composed of coaches, former athletes, state association officials, media representatives and educational leaders. Nominations were made through NFHS member associations.

Following is biographical information on the 11 individuals in the 2017 class of the National High School Hall of Fame.

## **ATHLETES**

**Joe Dial** was one of the top pole vaulters in high school history during his days at Marlow (Oklahoma) High School in the early 1980s. As a senior in 1981, Dial broke the state and

national record with a vault of 17-9½, which stood as the national high school record for 18 years. He was the first high school athlete to break the 18-foot barrier and eventually cleared 18-1¼ before concluding his high school career. He also set the national indoor record as a senior with a 17-4½ effort and won the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association state title in the pole vault four consecutive years. Dial also was state champion in the long jump as a senior with a 23-5½ effort. He was twice named to the *Track and Field News* High School All-America Team. Dial's success continued at the next level, where he was a four-time NCAA pole vault champion while competing at Oklahoma State University. He was the first collegiate pole vaulter to clear 19 feet, and he was the world record-holder in the pole vault in 1986. Dial is in his 24<sup>th</sup> season as head track and cross country coach at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

**Lisa Fernandez** established herself as one of the top pitchers in high school softball history during her four years (1986-89) at St. Joseph's High School in Lakewood, California. Although almost 30 years have passed since her high school days, Fernandez still ranks second nationally in career earned-run average with a microscopic 0.07 mark. She recorded 37 no-hitters and 12 perfect games (both still rank in the top 10 nationally) during her career, and she led her St. Joseph's team to the 1989 California Interscholastic Federation-Southern Section Softball Championship and was named Player of the Year in California. She won 80 games in her four years – 69 by shutout. Fernandez then was a four-time All-American at UCLA and led the Bruins to two NCAA championships. She compiled a career record of 93-7 and led the nation as a senior with a 0.23 earned-run average. She was the first softball player to win the Honda-Broderick Cup, which is given to the top collegiate female athlete in all sports. Fernandez then helped Team USA to three gold medals in Atlanta (1996), Sydney (2000) and Athens (2004). She is currently an assistant softball coach at UCLA.

**Bobby Richardson** was a high school baseball and basketball standout in South Carolina before his eventual stardom with the New York Yankees. Richardson lettered three years in baseball and basketball at Edmunds High School in Sumter, South Carolina. He led the baseball team to two state titles and played an integral role in the success of his American Legion team, which was crowned state champs in 1950 and 1952. Richardson signed with the Yankees on the

day he graduated from high school at the age of 17 and had a quick ascent to the major leagues. As the second baseman on the Yankees' teams with Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris, Richardson was a seven-time American League all-star and was a part of three World Series championship teams (1958, 1961, 1962) and was World Series MVP in 1960 when the Yankees lost to the Pittsburgh Pirates. He was runner-up to Mantle for the 1962 American League MVP. Richardson retired in 1966 at the age of 31 and, in 1970, began a six-year run as baseball coach at the University of South Carolina. Known as the father of South Carolina baseball, Richardson led the Gamecocks to the 1975 College World Series. He later coached at Coastal Carolina College and Liberty University. Richardson continues to reside in his hometown of Sumter, South Carolina.

**Melissa (Missy) West** was a three-sport star at Franklin Academy in Malone, New York, in the mid-1990s, setting numerous records in basketball and softball and leading the soccer team in scoring. In basketball, she averaged 29 points per game and was named Miss Basketball in New York as a senior. She scored 2,605 points and helped her team to the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) Section 10 title. In softball, she won 64 games and pitched 15 no-hitters and two perfect games and led her team to the NYSPHSAA state championship. She was selected Player of the Year in New York and was chosen for one All-American team. She was a standout on the soccer team as well, scoring 63 goals and contributing 15 assists during her high school career. West played basketball at Duke University for four years and was an integral member of the Blue Devils' 1999 NCAA Women's Division I Basketball Championship team. She played professional basketball in Germany for two years and then coached at State University of New York-Canton, Hartwick College and St. Leo University in Florida. She currently resides in Tampa, Florida.

## **COACHES**

**Russ Cozart** has been almost perfect during his 42 years as wrestling coach at Brandon (Florida) High School. Through the 2015-16 season, Cozart had lost only six of his 653 dual meets (647-6) for a winning percentage of .991. In fact, it was not until 2008 that Cozart lost a dual meet, leading Brandon to a national record 459 consecutive dual-meet victories. He has led Brandon to 27 Florida High School Athletic Association state wrestling titles, including a

current streak of 16 consecutive championships, and is in the running for another state title this year. Cozart's teams have captured the district title in each of his 42 seasons, and his consecutive streak of regional titles ended last year at 26. Cozart has coached 202 All-Americans, 115 individual state champions and 141 individual state finishers. During the 2012-13 season, his wrestlers registered 29 consecutive pins and won 146 consecutive matches. He was selected USA Wrestling National Developmental Coach of the Year in 2016 and NFHS National Wrestling Coach of the Year in 2014, and he has been inducted into the Florida Sports Hall of Fame and the Florida Wrestling Hall of Fame.

**Joe Lombard** ranks second nationally in career coaching victories in high school girls basketball during his 38-year career at two Texas schools. After seven years at Nazareth (Texas) High School, Lombard has coached the girls basketball team at Canyon (Texas) High School since 1985 and entered the 2016-17 season with a 1,261-117 record – a 91.5 winning percentage. He has led his teams to 18 Texas University Interscholastic League (UIL) state championships – six at Nazareth and 12 at Canyon – and four second-place finishes. He has never missed the UIL state playoffs in his 38 years of coaching. Lombard's teams have won 30 or more games in 27 of his 38 seasons, and he has never won fewer than 25 games, and he coached four undefeated teams – two at Nazareth and two at Canyon. His 2002-03 team at Canyon finished first in the final national rankings by *USA Today*. Lombard also has coached cross country and has led his teams to seven UIL Cross Country State Championships. He was inducted into the Texas Basketball Hall of Fame in 2007 and last year was inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

**Steve Shondell** was one of the top girls volleyball coaches in the nation during his 34 years at Muncie (Indiana) Burriss High School. From 1976 to 2009, Shondell won 1,183 matches and lost only 95 and led his teams to 21 Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) state championships. His 92.7 winning percentage is the highest among all high school coaches with at least 700 victories. Amazingly, the first eight of those state titles came in single-class competition when Burriss, a school with less than 300 students, competed against all schools in the state. Currently, he ranks seventh all-time nationally in coaching victories. Shondell won 13 consecutive state titles to close his career, and his teams posted seven undefeated seasons. In

addition to this 21 IHSA state titles, Shondell's teams also won four USA Volleyball National Championships. After concluding his career at Burriss, Shondell coached the women's volleyball team at Ball State University, his alma mater, for six years before retiring in March 2016. He was twice named National High School Volleyball Coach of the Year and was inducted into the American Volleyball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2007.

**Bernie Walter** was the most successful high school baseball coach in Maryland history during his 36 years at Arundel High School in Gambrills, Maryland. Walter won 670 games during his career that ended in 2009, winning 15 regional titles and a record 10 Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) state championships. His teams also finished second in the state tournament two times and won 16 Anne Arundel County titles. His 1993 team was selected mythical national champions by *Collegiate Baseball*. Walter won 80 games in seven years at Archbishop Curley High School in Maryland to begin his career, and he served four years as director of baseball operations at the University of Maryland, College Park, after retiring from Arundel High School. Walter has been involved with USA Baseball for many years, including coaching the junior team to medals in 1988 and 1990. He was inducted into the American Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2007, and he was a contributor to the Coaching Baseball online course on the NFHS Learning Center ([www.NFHSLearn.com](http://www.NFHSLearn.com)).

**Jerry Winterton** recorded a remarkable winning percentage as a high school wrestling coach during his 30-year career at Cary (North Carolina) High School. From 1981 to 2010, Winterton compiled a 621-16 record, a winning percentage of 97.5. Including four years at East Wake High School to begin his career, Winterton's overall record was 642-34 (95.0 percent). Winterton led Cary High School to 11 North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) state wrestling tournament titles and eight dual-team championships, and his teams finished second in those two events another 13 times. Known as Mr. Wrestling in North Carolina, Winterton coached 42 individual state champions and 30 All-Americans, and he registered 166 tournament victories – tops among all wrestling coaches in the United States. Winterton's teams won 28 consecutive conference championships (1983-2010), and he was selected one of the top 100 coaches from all sports in the 100-year history of the NCHSAA. Winterton was selected North Carolina Wrestling Coach of the Year 10 times and National Coach of the Year

twice, and he was named to the North Carolina Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2004.

## **OFFICIAL**

**Bill Laude** has been involved in officiating football, basketball and baseball in Illinois for 50 years. He has been the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) football rules interpreter since 1988 and the head IHSA football clinician since 1999. He officiated IHSA Football State Championship games five times and has been Coordinator of Officials for the Football State Championships five times since 2010. In basketball, Laude officiated the IHSA state finals three times in the 1980s, and he officiated the IHSA Baseball State Finals three times as well (1989, 1990, 1994). Laude is one of 11 officials in state history to officiate state finals in football, basketball and baseball. A full-time high school teacher for 35 years, Laude was appointed to a special IHSA committee in 1997 designed to improve rules knowledge and mechanics for officials in the state of Illinois, and he was an inaugural instructor for the IHSA Train the Trainer program, which officials must complete in order to become IHSA clinicians. Laude was NFHS Football Official of the Year in Illinois in 1988 and NFHS Baseball Official of the Year in Illinois in 1996.

## **ADMINISTRATOR**

**Rick Wulkow** had a profound impact on high school sports – both in his home state of Iowa and nationally – for almost 50 years before his retirement in January 2015. After 13 years as a high school teacher, coach, athletic director and principal, Wulkow joined the Iowa High School Athletic Association in 1980 – spending 25 years as assistant executive director and the final 10½ years as executive director. Nationally, Wulkow made significant contributions to NFHS playing rules through his service as chair of the NFHS Basketball Rules Committee and member of the NFHS Football Rules Committee. He also served a four-year term on the NFHS Board of Directors (2008-12), including a term as president in his final year. Wulkow's contributions to officiating were extensive as well. He officiated high school basketball for 12 years and worked four championship games, and he was a top collegiate basketball official for 28 years, including the Big 12 Conference, Missouri Valley Conference, Conference USA and the Western Athletic Conference. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the National

Association of Sports Officials (NASO) and served a one-year term as president of the NASO Board.

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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 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.7 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](http://www.nfhs.org).

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