



connect

The monthly online news magazine of the Minnesota State High School League

SNAPSHOTS: Girls Sports in MN



Editor's Note: On June 23, 2022, Title IX, the landmark federal civil rights law that brought equality and athletic opportunities for girls and women, will celebrate its 50th year. Throughout the 2021-22 school year, the Minnesota State High School League will celebrate the trailblazers and share their stories.

Presented by:



Peterson's advocacy paves way to Adapted Athletics



During post-graduate work in the early 1980's, Minneapolis educator and coach Cathy Peterson took an elective course in Adapted Athletics. As part of the coursework, her professor at Mankato State University had her students write an essay that described a student of theirs that was facing challenges. Peterson dug right in.

She shared the journey of a student that had been involved in a house fire. Virtually every part of the student's body was permanently scarred because of the fire. Peterson provided vivid examples of how the student had limited movement because his skin didn't stretch. In her paper, Peterson, who would spend her entire iconic career in the Minneapolis Public Schools, weaved in the challenges of other students that used wheelchairs and other types of aides to participate in physical education classes.

"Those are my students, my kids," Peterson told Connect. "I was creating awareness with that paper. The professor was stunned. Within our coursework, heart issues, asthma, and maybe (cerebral palsy), were discussed, but nothing like we had daily in Minneapolis. I recall her asking, "Is this really true?" She drove up to see my classes for herself."

Peterson, who would complete her master's degree in 1984, would continue to be a tireless advocate for Adapted Athletics, not only at Minneapolis South where she spent the bulk of her career, but also a pioneer that advocated for co-curricular opportunities for students with special needs across the Minnesota State High School League. Peterson played a pivotal role as a member of the Board of Directors from 1991-95 when Adapted Athletics was being considered, and then ultimately, approved as a sanctioned activity by the Representative Assembly in November of 1992. Adapted Soccer would begin the journey for Adapted Athletics in the fall of 1993.

"When I was on the Board, I made presentations on behalf of Adapted Athletics," Peterson said. "It was a well-accepted concept, but not really understood completely. I kept encouraging the other Board members to keep learning and soon they would embrace it."

The roots of Adapted Athletics can be traced to Marshall University High School in Dinkytown on the University of Minnesota campus.



Cathy Peterson, back row, left, had a trailblazing career in teaching, coaching and administration in the Minneapolis School District during her 30-year career. Here she is pictured with Minneapolis South's Adapted Floor Hockey team.

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In 1972, League history was made when the girls track and field state meet was held. It was the first state meet for a girls sport in Minnesota for the first time since 1942 when a girls swimming meet was held. Track and field would be the only girls state meet opportunity offered until the 1974-75 school year when gymnastics, tennis and volleyball were added.

Dazzling performances and standout student-athletes fill the record books in the nearly 50 years of participation in Girls Track and Field.



Among the ones in recent memory are from Analisa Huschle of Bagley/Fosston. In 2009, she set a then all-time state meet record with a leap of 19 feet, 2.25 inches in the long jump. Two seasons later, she won four individual events in leading her teammates to its second team championship (a co-championship shared with St. Peter) in three seasons. She won the 100- and 200-meter dashes, her third consecutive Class A crown in the long jump and won the triple jump for the fourth consecutive season with a then all-time state record of 39-4.5. Her marks in the long jump and triple jump still rank as Class A records.



And many remember the stunning dominance of Windom's Heather Van Norman.

She won 12 track and field state championships and won the final 147 races of her prep career. As an eighth-grader in 1984, Van Norman finished third in both the 200- and 400-meter events. She would never lose again during her high school career. Van Norman won the 100-, 200- and 400-meter state championships in each of the next four seasons. In 1986, she single-handedly captured the Class A crown for Windom in recording 30 points. The following season, she and four teammates compiled 36 points in a successful Class A title defense.

After one season at the University of Minnesota, Van Norman transferred to Louisiana State University where she was an All-American in six events over three seasons and was a five-time national champion. She was an inductee into the League's Hall of Fame in 2017.



Hall Of Fame Class of 2022



Ron Ackerman
Fridley
Official



Debbie Driscoll
Mahtomedi
Coach



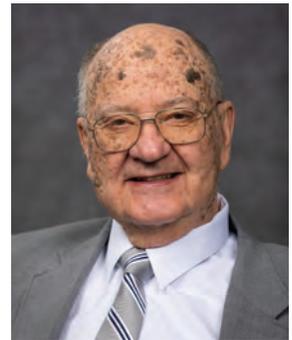
John Fogarty
Cannon Falls
Fine Arts



Lisa Lissimore
Woodbury
Administrator



Brian Luke
Stillwater
Coach



Larry Martin
Eden Prairie
Contributor



Joe Mauer
Cretin-Derham Hall
Athlete



Chris McDonald
Eagan
Fine Arts



Larry McKenzie
Minneapolis
Coach



Mindy Myhre Shannon
Mahtomedi
Athlete



Dr. William Roberts
St. Paul
Contributor



John Washington
Minneapolis
Administrator



Jim Weinzierl
Park Rapids
Official

Hall Of Fame Class of 2022



Meet Lisa Quednow



Lisa Quednow will begin her role as an Associate Director in May

Sports and activities have been a consistent and rewarding part of my life for as long as I can remember. As a child, I was introduced to baseball, basketball, golf, volleyball, piano, choir and French Horn. Each of these sports and activities provided me with lessons of success and challenge, hard work and fun, relationship development and lifelong friends. I knew from a young age that I wanted my experiences with these sports and activities to continue. I had some fantastic coaches and directors, who encouraged and mentored me to be a coach and administrator, to continue to provide these opportunities for kids.

I attended Austin Pacelli High School where I was afforded the opportunity to play volleyball, basketball, softball and golf. While there, I was able to participate in Band, Pep and and Orchestra at Austin High School, and enjoyed the rewards and positive relationships that music and Fine Arts provide students. After graduation, I attended Austin Community College (currently Riverland Community College) and continued playing volleyball, basketball and softball. After graduating with my AA degree, I transferred to St. Cloud

State University and was a member of their Athletic Training program, where I graduated with a BS in Exercise Science and minors in coaching and community health. I then pursued my master's degree in Athletic Administration while being the Graduate Assistant coach for the Women's Basketball team under Coach Lori Ulferts. Coming full circle, I then began my professional career as the Women's Athletic Director, Head Softball coach and professor at Riverland Community College. After my time there, I was the Athletic Director at Clark College, in Vancouver, Wash. During my time there, we started women's softball where I was the head coach for two years. After my time there, I transitioned to become the Activities Director at Austin High School.

During my time in Austin, I have continued to promote and provide access for our students to education-based activities and athletics. We have developed new programming such as Clay Target, Speech, Mountain Biking and many other new clubs and activities. We also have seen continued success in many of our athletic and music programs. I was fortunate enough to celebrate many section championship accomplishments, both individually and as a team, as well as much success at the state level. The Austin Packer Dance Team celebrated a state championship this season, the first in school history, and the first state championship for a Packers team in more than 30 years.

While in Austin, I was also blessed to serve on the Region 1AA executive committee, Minnesota State High School League's Board of Directors, MSHSL Activities Advisory, MSHSL Education Committee, MSHSL DEI committee and the National Federation of High School Sports Board of Directors. Those opportunities, and so many other experiences, will be a huge insight and asset as I begin to do the work of the League.

As I transition to my new role as Associate Director of the Minnesota State High School League, I look forward to continuing to find ways to provide access, opportunities and inclusion for all our kids throughout Minnesota, to the fantastic education-based extracurricular programs.

Meet Randi Hill



Randi serves as an administrative assistant

I am thrilled for this new opportunity with the Minnesota State High School League.

I was born and raised in Coon Rapids, Minn., and currently reside in Plymouth with my golden-doodle dog, Paisley. In high school, I was actively involved in many sports and activities such as soccer, basketball, softball, Link Crew and the National Honor Society.

After high school, I continued my education at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Business with an emphasis in Management and Leadership. After I received my undergraduate degree, I pursued my master's degree at St. Mary's University and graduated with a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership with an emphasis in Athletics and Activity Administration.

I have had various roles throughout my career which mostly centered around my passion for athletics and activities. I've worked in the Anoka-Hennepin School District where I was the girls' basketball and softball coach for many years at Coon Rapids High School. As an alum of Coon Rapids High School, it was important to me to give back to the programs that provided me with so much.

For the past seven years, I was the Community Schools Coordinator at Jackson Middle School. In that role, I was coordinating and managing all the daily operations for after-school programs in athletics and activities under the community education umbrella.

I am grateful for this new opportunity with the League, and I am excited to build relationships with our member schools and continue to promote athletics and activities for all students. These programs and opportunities have such a positive, meaningful and lifelong impact for our students, and I am fortunate to be a part of this.

do you know?

- 1 What member school won the first Girls Track and Field State Meet in 1972?
- 2 In the first four seasons that the Girls Track and Field State Meet was held in a single-class format, what member school won three consecutive titles?
- 3 True or False? No boys tennis player has ever won four consecutive championships?
- 4 Can you name the Region Executive Secretaries that are retiring after this school year after many years of service?
- 5 What Minnesotan will be receiving a National Citation Award for exemplary works and service in the Fine Arts?

Answers on page 6

Meet Phil Archer



Phil Archer will begin his role as an Associate Director in June

As I get set to join the Minnesota State High School League in June, I will be completing my service to Cretin-Derham Hall High School.

I have spent the past five years as the Athletic Director at my alma mater, leading 27 varsity programs and 75 athletic teams. Also included were roles with strategic planning, event management, advancement and development and Diversity Equity and Inclusion. Those areas were critical to create partnerships and influence from the athletic department. While at Cretin-Derham Hall, I also had the opportunity to serve on the Region 4AA Committee, several MSHSL committees and groups that included the EXCEL Award, Co-Op Ad Hoc, LEAD Liaison and Return to Play.

Prior to my service at Cretin-Derham Hall, I worked in leadership and was a sales professional in a third-party logistics brokering and supply chain management. Before logistics, I worked in medical device sales and the neurological soft tissue therapy industry. It was coaching and helping within the Macalester College athletic department between 2014 to 2019 that brought me back to athletics from the business world, and ultimately, to a leadership role in athletic administration.

I graduated with a degree in kinesiology from the University of Minnesota in 2003 and played football for the Gophers from 1999-2002. After graduating from the U, I started a master's degree program at Western Illinois University in Exercise Science and played a fifth year of football in 2003. I was drafted directly to NFL Europe by the Amsterdam Admirals for the Spring 2005 season. Also included in my professional playing career were stints with the San Diego Chargers, Minnesota Vikings and an additional season with Amsterdam.

The lessons of service and volunteer work from growing up in St. Paul's Rondo Neighborhood have guided me into adulthood. As a kid, I spent time working at the Hallie Q. Brown food shelf, working Lutheran Brotherhood Neighborhood clean ups or volunteering at the Boys and Girls Club. That has turned into serving on committees and working with local non-profits that benefit Twin Cities youth. It also paved the way for the Jimmy Lee Football Camp, a free event, that brought local companies together along with college and professional football players to work directly with the youth of St. Paul to share the love of football.

I'm really excited to find another way to use athletics and other co-curricular opportunities to serve my community and the State of Minnesota at a higher level. There are unique lessons that athletics and activities teach someone that are crucial to success in life for the long-term. I get excited knowing we can give kids and coaches the tools to achieve dreams.

Along with my wife, Crystal, we reside in Blaine with our four children: Keyon (15), Jaeda (10), Gianna (8), Kyu (6) and are second parents to Forrest Lloyd (29, Denver, Colo.).

Former Princeton Activities Director Rita Rislund, A "jack of all trades" Inducted into MnIAAA Hall of Fame

Courtesy: Jeffrey Hage, Monticello Union Times



A longtime activities director has been honored for her dedication Princeton's student athletes.

Rita Rislund, who worked in the Princeton School District for 34 years, was inducted Tuesday, March 29 into the Minnesota Interscholastic Activities Administrators Association's hall of fame.

Rislund is known as a trailblazer in the advancement of opportunities for girls in athletics.

A 1962 graduate of Detroit Lakes High School, Rislund is credited with starting the girls track program at Fargo North High School in Fargo, North Dakota where she was a student teacher while attending Moorhead State University.

Princeton High School is the one and only school at which Rislund worked. It was at PHS where, in 1968, Rislund was one of five area physical education instructors who formed a conference in which girls could participate in volleyball, basketball, and track.

"There were no female sports," Rislund recalled in a video produced for the hall of fame induction by the MnIAAA.

Rislund became the coach of those first PHS girls volleyball, basketball, and track teams. She was also the cheerleader advisor.

"I was a jack of all trades," she said.

It's through the connections with these female student athletes that Rislund earned the nickname, "Riz."

Rislund said that through her 34-year career, she hopes she was able to instill in all the students that she had that she was a fair person who gave every single participant an opportunity to be successful.

After retiring as the Princeton High School AD in 2002, Rislund continued to stay involved in high school athletics.

She worked as a high school girls volleyball referee and continued to work track meets.

"I have been at state track meets as an official for about 50 years," Rislund said.

In 2014 she was recognized as an outstanding official by the coaches association.

During her 34 years as activities director at Princeton High School, Rislund was a chair of the Rum River Conference, Chair of the 7AA committee, founding member of the "Women in Sports Leadership" at the Minnesota State High School League. According to the MnIAAA, Rislund also served as a member of the Representative Assembly and ad hoc committees on rules for the MSHSL.

Rislund ran many tournaments on the conference, sub-section and section levels and was a part of writing the activities handbook at Princeton High School.

"The day I got to be an athletic director was the start of the most rewarding job I ever had," Rislund said.

Rislund was honored on Tuesday, March 29 at the MnIAAA's annual convention in St. Cloud.

Cathy Peterson was a trailblazer for adapted athletics

Continued from Cover



Peterson as an eighth-grader in 1961.

Marshall-University physical education teacher, Ed Prohofsky, also a famed boys basketball coach that would later become the school's athletic director, was the primary lead advocate for the adoption of Adapted Athletics along with Jim Christy, a 1971 Marshall-University graduate, that would become a Hall of Fame Adapted Athletics instructor and coach at Minneapolis South.

Adapted Floor Hockey was the first sport created for special needs students in Minnesota during the 1974-75 school year. A league was formed that consisted for four teams: two from Marshall-University, a team from the Courage Center called the Minneapolis Independents and another comprised of alumni. Peterson said the league then became secondary students only in 1975 with still four teams: Two from St. Paul, one from Marshall-University and the other, the Minneapolis Independents.

In 1982, the Minneapolis Public Schools closed Central, West and Marshall-University high schools. Peterson said the special needs students were re-enrolled at Minneapolis South.

Six years later, the Minnesota Special Interscholastic Sports Association was formed to organize Adapted Athletics for special needs students. The Minnesota Adapted Athletics Association also existed, having been formed in 1978 and incorporated in 1984. Those groups merged, and in 1990, formed two divisions of Adapted Athletics.

Prohofsky, who would become the District Athletic Director for the Minneapolis Public Schools and become known as the "Father of Adapted Athletics" continued to lobby the Minnesota State High School League for the sanctioning of Adapted Athletics. A pivotal part of the advocacy was created when Peterson became the first female to represent Sections 5AA and 6AA on the League's Board of Directors. Her passion, enthusiasm and day-to-day interaction with students that faced physical and cognitive challenges was fueled by their drive to excel, succeed and be included in the school community of opportunities.

Behind Peterson's leadership, the Board of Directors approved the sanctioning and sent the proposal to the Representative Assembly for final consideration, passage and enactment. During the discussion, a delegate shared his personal testimony that began with his daughter being in a severe car accident. His daughter had a background as a standout athlete and she had the drive to heal while still answering the call to compete. Adapted Athletics was that avenue for her and others.

After the Representative Assembly approved the proposal, the Minnesota State High School League became the first state association to sanction Adapted Athletics.

"After the vote for passage, Ed leaned in and told me that we could now both die with smiles on our faces," Peterson said. "We had done it. We all wanted it so much for these students. We created wonderful opportunities for some incredible students. I believe Ed and Jim lit the torch for Adapted Athletics. I just helped carry it to the finish line."

That trio's leadership and service during their educational careers were recognized by the League and professional stakeholders. Peterson and Prohofsky were inducted in the League's Hall of Fame in 1999 and Christy followed as part of the Class of 2009.

Adapted Athletics is in its 29th year of sanctioning by the League. The state tournaments were not played in 2020 and 2021 because of the global pandemic. Opportunities are available in Soccer, Floor Hockey, Softball and Bowling in the Cognitive Impaired (CI) and Physical Impaired (PI) divisions. Adapted Bowling also offers a division for students on the autism spectrum.

"I've been so lucky in my career to work with amazing people, that includes leaders and students," said Peterson, who retired in 1999.

Peterson also believes she was fortunate in her own personal journey through athletics and education. A native of North Minneapolis, she attended St. Bridget's and began participating in softball, basketball, tennis and basketball until she graduated from the parochial school in 1961. She then attended Minneapolis Henry and graduated in 1965. The Minneapolis Public Schools at that time offered extra-murals, a program that went a step beyond intramurals. Many schools in the district participated.

In addition to the Girls Athletic Association, she and others competed in the Don Bosco League, which was another path in creating opportunities for others.

"I was blessed to be raised in these two associations, but there was much more ahead for female athletes," she said. "We were part of something special, especially because Title IX was in the works."

After graduating from Mankato State in 1969, she began what would be her entire teaching, coaching and leadership career within the Minneapolis Public Schools. She met Prohofsky when both were teaching. Minneapolis South would become involved in the MAAA and recruited other schools to participate as well. Peterson's heart overflows with joyful memories of teaching, coaching and leading whom she fondly calls "her kids."

"These kids would go to tournaments on the weekends and return as champions," she said. "They got noticed. They are rolling around in wheelchairs wearing the same letter jackets as the other kids. These kids are becoming Homecoming King and Queen and are being selected Athena Award winners. The acceptance within the student body was huge. I don't have to worry about these athletes anymore. They continue to grow and be supported."

Among other field trips, Peterson took her students to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. She recalls one student that was blind insisting on riding down a hill on a toboggan by himself.

"The joy he had with the wind blowing in his face was priceless," Peterson said. "I learned more from these kids than they did from me."



This is the Girls Athletic Association Honor Trophy, awarded to recipients beginning in 1934.

quiz answers

Questions on Page 4

1. There were two: White Bear Lake and International Falls shared the team title.
2. Moorhead won three consecutive championships from 1973-75.
3. False. Forest Lake's Dusty Boyer won four consecutive Class AA crowns from 2009-12.
4. Scott Larson (Region 3AA) and Jim Weinzierl (Region 8A).
5. Edina's Bill Webb. The Hall of Fame music educator will be honored during the NFHS Summer Meeting in San Antonio.

Salute to Retiring ADs

The Minnesota State High School League and the Minnesota Interscholastic Activities Administrators Association salutes the retiring Activities Directors that will conclude their service to member schools at the end of the school year. Thank you for providing dedicated service, enthusiastic encouragement and leadership in creating co-curricular opportunities for students.



**Laurie Bitter,
Indus**

- 34 years in education
- Past six years as Indus Principal/Activities Director



**Beth Clark,
Hermantown**

- 33 years in education
- Past 16 years as Hermantown AD



**Mark Ekren,
Morris Area**

- 36 years in education
- Three years in Herman-Norcross district
- 33 years in Morris Area district
- Past 11 years as Morris Area AD



**Treacy Funk,
St. Paul Central**

- 32 years with St. Paul Public Schools
- 31 years at St. Paul Central
- Past 12 years as St. Paul Central AD



**Greg Garmen,
Crookston**

- 35 years in education
- 26 years with Crookston school district
- Past eight years as Crookston AD



**Bob Grey,
Montevideo**

- 33 years with Montevideo school district
- Past 23 years as Montevideo AD



**Mark Herbes,
Upsala**

- 44 years with Upsala school district
- Past seven years as Upsala AD



**Dan Johnson,
Hopkins**

- 38 years in education
- 26 years in Hopkins school district
- Past 23 years as Hopkins AD



**Bill Mills,
Minnewaska Area**

- 35 years in education
- Past 23 years as Minnewaska Area AD



**John Oelfke,
Robbinsdale Cooper**

- 37 years in District 281
- 36 years at Robbinsdale Cooper
- Past 20 years as Robbinsdale Cooper AD



**Dan Roff,
Fridley**

- 40 years in education
- 25 years with Minneapolis Public Schools
- Seven years AD at Minneapolis Edison
- Past 15 years at Fridley as AD



**Jaime Sherwood,
Wayzata**

- 40 years in education
- 29 years as an administrator
- 26 years as Wayzata AD



**Mark Solberg,
Cambridge-Isanti**

- 41 years in Cambridge-Isanti School District
- Past 23 years as Cambridge-Isanti AD

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