

# Box Elder's Ripplinger earns national coaching award

Typically, a coach of the year award is given either to a coach who led his team to a championship or a coach whose team showed a huge improvement over the previous year's results.

Not Mike Ripplinger's award from the National Federation of State High School Associations.

The Box Elder wrestling coach was named National Coach of the Year in his sport in a year his team neither won a title.

They didn't improve on last year's state 4-A championship team, either, but the title undoubtedly contributed to Ripplinger being honored this year.

That's because the NFHS considers it more a lifetime achievement award than for any one specific year.

"These awards are not 'single-season' achievement awards, but rather reward coaches for a cumulative career of accomplishments, not necessarily all of which take place on the court or field," said Tim Flannery, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the NFHS Coaches



Roy  
Burton

Prep Notes

Association.

Ripplinger learned of the award in a letter a few days ago and was humble about his accomplishment.

"That was kind of a neat thing," he said. "I didn't expect that. I was real appreciative of those that must have nominated me."

Ripplinger wanted to share the credit for the award.

"It's not just me but the coaching staff and my boosters club," he said. "Without all those people working together, it would be tough to be very successful. You've got to have a lot of people helping you. When I win an award like that I feel like it's probably something more than just I should receive. I've got great assistants and great boosters and all of us together accomplish great things."

The coaches association

has an advisory board made up of a chair and eight sectional representatives that considers the state award recipients in their respective sections and selects the best candidates for the sectional award in each sport category. The advisory board then makes recommendations to the NFHS national office in Indianapolis.

The national committee considers the sectional candidates, ranks them according to a point system, and determines a winner for each of the 20 sport categories, plus one "other category."

This year, the NFHS recognized 419 state coaches, 138 sectional coaches and 21 national sport coaches of the year. New Jersey is the all-time leader in national coach recipients with 21, followed by Michigan with 20 and Kansas with 18. The complete state and sectional coach of the year award listing will be available on the NFHS Web site, [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org), by April 1.

## Go South, young people

Baseball and softball players are getting into the

swing of spring this week with their first games of the season.

Their seasons are already heading south, however. Maybe that's because Southern Utah is the only place in the state you can rely on not getting snowed on in early March, at least most of the time.

Northridge, Sky View, Bear River and Logan will all participate in the Pine View HS Panther Breakout No. 1 on Friday and Saturday.

Local teams will also be down south for the St. George softball tournament. Dixie High is hosting the March Warm-Up at Canyons Complex this weekend.

Track and field athletes will be in the area for the Hurricane Invitational.

Other teams will just have to brave March with the rest of us, lion or lamb.

## High school hockey

Utah County defeated Davis County 10-4 Thursday for the independents championship.

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