

Minnesota High School Nordic Ski Coaches Association Coach of the Year Awards

Girls Head Coach of the Year: Josh Scharnberg (Fergus Falls)

Josh is an avid trail runner and ultramarathon racer. Before moving back to Fergus Falls, Nordic skiing was not a part of his life. But when Fergus Falls High School made Nordic an official school sport, Josh was approached to coach and decided to give it a shot. In the six years he has been a head coach, Josh has transformed the Otters from a great club to a competitive organization while maintaining a fun and caring atmosphere. His efforts at hosting meets in low snow years have become the stuff of legend, creating a memorable experience for skiers and making the best of challenging situations. Josh is a true ambassador of the sport! He has been able to foster a community effort that can support a program that continues to grow and improve. In the last few seasons, Fergus Falls has sent their first ever boys and girls teams to the State Meet. He wears many hats, but always with a smile and calm demeanor. His leadership, consistency, sportsmanship, and hard work are part of the success of his team and the development of Nordic skiing in west-central Minnesota.



Boys Head Coach of the Year: Andrew Hansen (Wayzata)

I have been coaching at Wayzata for nine years (seven as head coach). Before coaching at Wayzata, I skied for Doug Boonstra at Eden Prairie and that is where I learned what a high quality high school ski program looks like. One of my big goals as a coach is to instill in nordic athletes that nordic skiing is a TEAM sport. I encourage an atmosphere where all athletes put the team goals ahead of their individual goals. I think this is one reason why we have had a very successful team program for the past nine years. Between boys and girls we've had 12 conference team champs, 12 section team champs, 3 state team champs, 72 all conference athletes, and 36 all-state athletes. This year, my boys team won its second consecutive state title and I am so proud of them. As association president, I think I have done a good job with advocating for our wants, helping our proposals pass into policy, streamline communication, and get input from all our association coaches.



**Girls Assistant Coach of the Year:
Pete Hoyem (Stillwater)**

For 20 seasons and counting (literally and figuratively), Coach Pete has been a dedicated and outstanding Assistant Coach for the Stillwater Nordic Ski team. Additionally serving as the Head Coach of the track and cross-country running teams at Oak-Land Junior High and a beloved math teacher at Stillwater Area High School, Pete always puts athletes first. He brings energy and expertise to training, making it both fun and challenging for our JV skiers—whether there’s snow or not. Beyond coaching, Pete takes on the logistical puzzle of managing our demanding bus schedule and serves as our team’s unofficial human computer. At the finish line, he flawlessly records start times, finish times, and computes elapsed times for our 75-athlete squad with impressive precision. An accomplished athlete himself, Pete has twice won the Stillwater Marathon and regularly logs 55 to 75 running miles per week—often on top of daily ski practices in the winter. Our team is incredibly fortunate to have such a phenomenal coach, teacher, and leader who bridges the gap between the athletes and the school. Oh, and he’s not a bad fisherman either, doncha know!



**Boys Assistant Coach of the Year:
Ethan Youso (Brainerd)**

Ethan Youso wrapped up his first season as a full time assistant coach for the Brainerd High School Nordic Team. Prior to coaching at the high school he coached for a year for Brainerd’s junior high program. Ethan grew up in Bemidji and skied for Bemidji High School. As a high school skier he helped as a volunteer coach with the MN youth ski league. Ethan has brought a unique perspective to the team based on his experience in nordic racing. He has been instrumental in coaching the kids at every level on their race strategy, technique, and developing a race routine. He has built a good rapport with the team and added an element of fun to the season. Our skiers seek him out when they have questions about race strategy or specific technique questions. Ethan has an upbeat and calm personality bringing balance to our team, keeping the team’s mindset moving in a positive direction. He has been a key component to our success as a team and a program this year!



Volunteer of the Year: Winona Snowmakers

The Winona community's man-made loops at St Mary's University ski trails are volunteer and donation-driven. A group of snow-makers gave hundreds of hours this winter and blew a 1.6km manmade loop. The snow-makers are also the groomers. As a result, the kids were on snow as early as December 1st. This includes skiing on daily grooming and kicking in deep tracks, even after two significant warm-ups this winter.

