

2024 Football Alberta Award Winners

Football Alberta is proud to announce the winners of the following Coach/Official/Volunteer Awards for the 2024 season. Each person recognized has been informed and will be receiving a commemorative plaque from the Football Alberta office. Please note that the **Norm Kimball Coach of the Year Award** goes to the overall coach of the year in all disciplines in Alberta.

Rob and Grace Zittlau Media Award

Michael Preston (IFAF Media Director)

Michael Preston's job is to promote IFAF to the world, but it is for his work with Football Alberta during the 2024 IFAF World Junior Championships that he is the winner of this award. Right from the start, Michael took on the role of media coordinator for the event and managed the dissemination of information to all points of the planet from local media to the main media outlets for the participating nations. During the competition, he worked tirelessly with volunteers arranging for interviews post-game and results distribution. His kind but focussed attitude made his participation on the organizing committee a pleasure. Michael was able to pick up on things that would be of interest and promote them worldwide. He also managed the social media aspect of things for the event as well. The ascent of Austria and the loss of the USA to Japan in the semi-finals went viral to the point where all things posted on the web created at over 100,000,000 exposures and counting. Michael's participation with our committee was seamless and welcome. The event would not have been the success if it weren't for him, and we are proud to award him the Rob and Grace Zittlau Media Award.

Official of the Year Award

Parry Steen (Edmonton Football Officials Association)

In 2024, Parry served as the co-Local Referee in Chief for the IFAF 2024 World Junior Championships in Edmonton. Working with Football Alberta's VP of Officials, Dan Aloisio, and IFAF's Referee in Chief, Davey Parsons, Parry worked tirelessly to not only secure top local officials to supplement the needs of the tournament, but also in hosting the 25 referees from other parts of Canada and the World. This also involved coordinating educational sessions for local on and off field officials (i.e. timers) regarding the requirements for the American 4-down game. The result was tremendous. Not only did the on-field officiating end of things go off without a hitch, but the visiting officials were also hosted in a first-class manor that left them and the IFAF executives extremely impressed with the job Parry did. The template set by the job done at the 2024 event will be used by future hosts to ensure that end of the event is done right. Parry's good nature and attention

to detail served the Host Committee well. A big part of the success of the 2024 IFAF World Junior Championships is thanks to him and his efforts and we are proud to award him the 2024 Official of the Year.

Novice Coach of the Year Award

Joel Brander (Ernest Manning High School)

Joel Brander is a former University of Calgary and Calgary Colt offensive lineman who has transitioned to coaching and doing it well. Only 21 years old, Joel took his passion to the Ernest Manning High School Griffins and assisted with their 2024 season culminating in a thrilling victory in the Division I Championship game against the St. Francis Browns where the Griffins won 39-32. Joel put in countless hours of film work and created innovative drills to not only instruct his players, which included many who were just starting their football careers, in the basics of offensive line play, but also kept things fresh the whole season long. Regarded as one of the great up and coming coaches to keep an eye on, Joel Brander is the 2024 Novice Coach of the Year.

Atom/Pee-Wee Coach of the Year Award

Tyrell Rohl (Airdrie Storm Pee-Wee)

Tyrell Rohl has been the head coach of the Airdrie Storm Pee-Wee team since 2017. Steadily building up a strong base, the Storm has gone undefeated in the Calgary Pee-Wee League for the past three seasons and have won the last two Championships. However, Tyrell's recognition this year has to do with more than just the championships. He sets a standard of recognizing the development portion of his job that goes way beyond just winning games. Each of his players is guaranteed to play in at least 50% of the game and he insists on making passing the ball just as important as running it. In 2024 the Storm offense threw the ball for over 2000 yards while running in for around 1500 which is almost unheard of at the Pee-Wee level. Tyrell also sets the same standards for the players of the Airdrie Storm Atom program. A true innovator, a championships coach, and a class act, Tyrell Rohl is the Atom/Pee-Wee Coach of the Year for 2024.

Bantam Coach of the Year Award

Jimmy Ralph (Raymond Jr. Comets)

The legend of football from the town of Raymond is not just a high school thing. Their bantam team, the Raymond Jr. Comets, have been a factor in Minor Provincials ever since they started in 1995. Raymond has appeared in the Tier I Bantam Championship game twelve times since then, winning seven including this past year with a 29-6 win over the Airdrie Raiders. For this their head coach, Jimmy Ralph, is being named the Bantam Coach of the Year. A member of the famous Ralph family from Raymond, Jimmy was a special

performer at the high school, university, and professional days of his playing era, but has now been playing a part of giving back to the sport as a coach. Known as a coach who fosters sportsmanship, teamwork, and discipline amongst his players, the results speak for themselves as he kept the tradition of championship football alive in Raymond with all the players coming from a single junior high school. Well deserved, Jimmy Ralph is the 2024 Bantam Coach of the Year.

6-a-side Coach of the Year Award

Rob Harrod (Millwoods Christian High School)

One of 6-a-side's founding fathers in Alberta at the high school level, Rob Harrod is the 6-a-side Coach of the Year for 2024. His many years of support for the 6-a-side game has included participation in the 6-a-side All-Star Game each May, but it is for his team's dominance in 2024 that he is the winner of this award. In 2024 the Millwoods Christian Royals won their third Alberta Bowl Championship at the 6-a-side level in the past four years but put a statement on their run this year like no other. In the semi-finals their defense put on a clinic holding the Holy Redeemer Rebels to just 8 points (which is a pretty tough trick in 6-a-side) in a 63-8 romp, while a week later the offense came to play putting up a record 100 points in the Alberta win over their archrivals - the J.C. Charyk Hawks. Several Alberta Bowl records were set in that game but it is the man who is heading up the operation that gets the nod as this year 6-a-side Coach of the Year - Rob Harrod.

3A Coach of the Year Award

Vince Orioux, Dustin Fallscheer & Craig Paylor (Holy Rosary High School)

The three headed monster that makes up the head coach, offensive coordinator and defensive coordinator for the Holy Rosary High School Raiders from Lloydminster had their best year ever in 2024. The Raiders were once again a juggernaut, but this year they were especially dominant. Winning all 13 games on their schedule, they scored 557 points for while only allowing 11 against, punching their ticket to their record eleventh straight appearance at the Alberta Bowl. It was at the Alberta Bowl where the final cherry on top for the year came about as they defeated the Cochrane Cobras 22-3 giving the Raiders their first win over the Cobras in the Tier III/3A final in seven attempts. A team effort for sure, thusly we are proud to award Vince Orioux, Dustin Fallscheer and Craig Paylor the 3A Coach of the Year Award for 2024.

4A Coach of the Year Award

Zach Wilkie (Bellerose High School)

Zach Wilkie came in cold to the Bellerose program taking over the program as a first-year head coach for both the Senior and Junior teams at the school. The result was fantastic as

at the Senior level the Bulldogs lost their first game of the year to Beaumont, then never lost again including a victory over that same Beaumont team in the Metro Edmonton Miles Division Championship Game. At the Junior level, the Bulldogs recorded a respectable 4-2 regular season record before bowing to Salisbury in the semi-finals. Zach was not done their with the season, as he was named the head coach of the Football Alberta Senior Bowl North team in December and proceeded to lead the team to victory in the 2025 Senior Bowl with a 31-10 win over the South. A very good and organized youth coach, Zach has a bright future in the game and did wonderful things in 2024 taking all of his programs essentially from scratch and building winners. A perfect selection for the 4A Coach of the Year in 2024.

5A Coach of the Year Award

Codie Abrams (Harry Ainlay High School)

Codie Abrams had a busy year in 2024. Starting with his role as defensive coordinator for Team Alberta U16 and ending with his role as co-defensive coordinator with the senior team at Harry Ainlay as well as gameday consultant for the junior Titans. With Team Alberta U16, Cody helped the team get over the B.C. hump having lost to that province two straight years prior with a resounding 28-7 win. A loss to eventual champion Saskatchewan in the final may have been disappointing but the program definitely moved forward thanks to his help. With the Titans, his advice helped the junior team to the 2024 Metro Edmonton title, but it is for his work with the Senior Team that was most remarkable. His defense played a major role in Harry Ainlay's undefeated season which included a City Division I Championship, a thorough domination of the Ernest Manning Griffins in the Provincial 5A Semifinals (a team that had beaten them the year before), and a stellar job vs. the Raymond Comets in the 5A Championship game of the Alberta Bowl. At the Alberta Bowl, the Titan defense held the high-powered Comet offense to just 14 points, their lowest amount of the season, in the 37-14 victory. A busy man, but a very successful one as well, Codie Abrams is the 2024 5A Coach of the Year.

Norm Kimball Coach of the Year Award

Matt Hassett (Holy Trinity Academy)

Matt Hassett's 2024 was one of victory. Starting in the spring and summer when he served as head coach of Alberta's U17 team that competed in the Western Showcase in Calgary. After a convincing 26-0 victory over B.C. in the Semi-Final, Matt's boys won a thriller in the Final beating Saskatchewan 26-25 and claiming the Gold Medal.

During the Regular Season, Matt's Holy Trinity Academy Knights of Okotoks went 7-1 earning a spot in the 4A ASAA Provincial draw out of Zone 2. From there they took off, winning all three games going away, including the final in the Alberta Bowl which saw them defeat St. Joseph's 49-9.

Matt has a long history of putting out excellent teams. His leadership in attracting top players and coaches in the Okotoks area has made the Knights one of Alberta's top programs for years. In 2024 they were also named Canada's top small school by CFC. Their only loss of the season was at the hands of the 5A Finalist Raymond Comets where they did succeed in scoring the second most points against the Comets in 2024.

A true leader and great coach who did a fantastic job on two fronts this year. A great year for a great coach, Matt Hassett is the winner of the Football Alberta Norm Kimball Award as Coach of the Year.

Gary Hobson Volunteer of the Year Award (2 Awards)

Joe Schnurer (J.C. Charyk Hawks)

Joe Schnurer has been an instrumental figure in the promotion, growth, and development of amateur football in rural Alberta for the past 30 years. Joining the coaching staff for the J.C. Charyk High School Hawks from Hanna in its inaugural year of 1995 as a community volunteer, Joe has seen the program flourish and win three provincial titles during his tenure.

However, Joe's contributions do not end with coaching. He was a key figure in the creation of the 6-a-side All-Star Game and has been an administrator and coach in the process for the past eight seasons. As well, Joe was involved in setting up the Border Bowl for Team Alberta 6-a-side vs. Saskatchewan over the same time frame and the Can-Am Bowl hosted in Hanna in 2023 vs. Team USA 6-a-side.

A strong community builder, Joe has contributed to football in Hanna both on and off the field in amazing ways that has raised the profile of that town to one of Canada's top 6-a-side destinations. We are proud to present him with the 2024 Gary Hobson Volunteer of the Year Award.

Craig Reardon (Calgary Bantam Football Association)

Craig Reardon is a great example of long-term commitment to the sport of football. His initial involvement came 30 years ago when his son began playing with the bantam Wildcats in Calgary. He offered to help out and began a three-decade long involvement with Wildcats and Calgary Bantam Football Association. As General Manager of the Wildcats he has kept one of Calgary's top bantam programs in line and is always makes things run smoothly for all involved. Craig was also asked 8 years ago to serve on the Board of Directors for the CBFA as Treasurer and as a Director for the Calgary Spring Football Association.

On both Boards he is known as a calming, wise influence on decisions and has make life easy for the CBFA in the financial area and heads up the Concussion Protocol

Committee for CSFA as well as serving on their League Liaison Committee. Behind the scenes work for sure, but critical to the continued health and well-being of both leagues. Craig has been and will continue to be a valuable asset to all the groups he served in Calgary, and we are proud to award him the 2024 Gary Hobson Volunteer of the Year Award.

2024 Hall of Fame Inductees -

Jay Hetherington (Central Alberta Football)

Jay Hetherington is an icon in football in Alberta from coaching to instructing, to administration. Starting as an assistant coach at Strathcona H.S. in Edmonton, while he was still playing with the Edmonton Huskies, that spawned a 58-year connection with the game in Alberta that still continues today.

Jay's first head coaching job was at Wetaskiwin H.S. where he led them to a couple of Central Alberta Championships before transferring to Lindsay Thurber H.S. in Red Deer in 1986. During his time as head coach of the Raiders he would win numerous league titles as well as take them to the 1995 Tier I ASAA Provincial Championship Game - a feat no other Central Alberta team had done previously or since.

As an administrator in support of the game, Jay served as an NCCP Instructor for decades and was Football Alberta's Master Course Conductor from 1988-2005. Jay was instrumental in saving the Football Canada Cup in 1996. When it appeared the event would end due to no federal funding, Jay stepped up and offered Red Deer as a solution and created an innovative way to run the tournament at a low cost to the participating provinces and thus kept the fledgling event, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, alive. Jay also served on the Board of Director's of Football Alberta for seven years from 2017-2024.

In the late 1990's Jay worked hard along with Ken Van Loon to reconfigure minor football in Central Alberta and created the Central Alberta Bantam and Pee-Wee leagues to conform to Football Alberta standards, thus allowing teams to participate provincially.

Jay's influence on so many people, including those who have reached CFL and NFL's level has also included officials, one having officiated in 4 Grey Cups. So many people have benefitted from Jay's influence it is no wonder he was voted in to the Football Alberta Hall of Fame unanimously in his first year of eligibility.

Dennis Holowaychuk (Calgary High School/U of C/ Colts)

Dennis Holowaychuk has a rich history of success in Alberta as a player, football coach and administrator spanning over 50 years. Starting as a player with the Edmonton Huskies of the CJFL he was twice named a Conference All-Star before starting for the University of Alberta Golden Bears for two seasons. After that Dennis entered a career in

Education which saw him coach football at the high school level for over 40 years at Bishop Carroll, St. Mary's, Bishop Grandin, and Rundle College. This resulted in many championships including two straight Tier 4 ASAA Provincial titles with the Rundle College Cobras in 2009 and 2010 - a program he started from scratch just two years earlier.

At the elite level, Dennis' contributions were also excellent. Over 20 seasons of volunteer coaching with the University of Calgary Dinos, Dennis served in various capacities from unit coach to offensive coordinator and was a part of three Vanier Cup appearances and one victory. He also served as the first ever offensive coordinator for Team Alberta in the inaugural year of the Football Canada Cup and helped lead Alberta to a gold medal in 1995. At the Junior level, Dennis served as head coach and offensive coordinator for the Calgary Colts from 2019-21 and helped keep the lights on during the challenging COVID-19 epidemic giving his players meaningful on-field experiences throughout.

A great man with a great love of football, Dennis Holowaychuk, we are proud to induct Dennis Holowaychuk into the Football Alberta Hall of Fame.

Richard Credico & Aurelio Delbello (Catholic Central H.S.)

Nominated together and forever one of Alberta's best tandems in the coaching ranks, Richard Credico and Aurelio Delbello are now Football Alberta Hall of Famers.

Having played high school football together, they both went to Minot State for their university playing days then started their education careers at Catholic Central High School in Lethbridge in the mid-70's. From there they took on the challenge of coaching the Cougars in various capacities for the next 35 years. During that time, they rebuilt the feeder bantam program below them and took the Catholic Central to five league championships and two Provincial Tier 2 titles in 1985 and 2010.

However, it is for the on-field success as well as their imprint on their players that makes them Hall of Famers. Many letters of reference regarding these two were received in support of their nomination and all detail the great leadership they showed on-field as well as the compassion and guidance given off-field that so many people credit as a great part of the success in their own lives. It's impossible to separate the two as they played their entire football careers together then interchanged their duties at CCH over the years to the point as it was hard to know who officially was the head coach in any given year.

Sadly, another connection for these two great football legends is they both passed away within six months of each other in 2020 and for that their Hall of Fame recognition will be given posthumously to their families. Two great leaders of people who are sadly missed but we are honoured to now have them a part of the Football Alberta Hall of Fame.

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