

# North Jersey Sports Awards 2023: Complete list of winners, best moments from the show

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WAYNE -- It was certainly a night to remember for the North Jersey high school sports community.

A large crowd of athletes, coaches, family members and friends was on hand at Passaic County Technical Institute in Wayne on Wednesday night at the 2023 North Jersey High School Sports Awards show, sponsored by Bergen New Bridge Medical Center.

There were 40 awards handed out during the event, including 33 that went to the Players of the Year in their respective sports.

Jimmy Mullen of St. Joseph was named Boys Athlete of the Year, and Stephanie Yakoff of Fort Lee was named Girls Athlete of the Year. Both are now two-time winners of those awards; Mullen won in 2022 and Yakoff won in 2020.

Mullen never lost to a New Jersey opponent in his high school wrestling career, but this year may have been his most impressive. He led the Green Knights to the Non-Public A team title, then became the third Garden State grappler to win three state titles at heavyweight (he didn't compete in the condensed state tournament in 2021). He was also a first-team All-North Jersey selection in football, and plans to compete in both sports at Virginia Tech.

"There's a big target on my back especially coming in freshman year winning the state title. Every year I thought that I had to do ... a lot more work to come back stronger the next year so no one closes the gap on me," Mullen said.



Yakoff went undefeated in her high school tennis career and capped her time at Fort Lee by becoming the third New Jersey girl to win at least three state championships (no state tournament was held in 2020). She only lost three sets in her entire career, and is headed to Harvard.

"It means a lot to being able to end my high school experience playing tennis all four years for Fort Lee and just being able to break records especially for my school and myself," Yakoff said.

The Record's Athletes of The Week for the 2022-23 school year were also honored at the show as a video tribute to the iconic work of Charlie McGill was played for all. McGill created the Athlete of the Week feature as a young artist at The Record in 1954, and he's been doing it ever since.

### **Specialty Awards**

The 2023 Charlie McGill Scholarship Awards were given to Giavanna Cafasso of Lakeland and Brandon Meneses of Elmwood Park.

"Never take life for granted because life will throw you many fast balls and curve balls," Cafasso said, "you have to stay strong, step up to the plate, keep your head held high."

Robbie Amoia of Emerson was the recipient of this year's Courage Award.



The Old Tappan football team was honored with the Team of the Year award.

"Our seniors were definitely a huge help. They were a role in paying to our success. They showed us the ropes of football, which is hard work, it's dedication, it's leadership, it's just the grind," Old Tappan wide receiver Evan Brooks said.

Immaculate Heart girls volleyball coach Maria Nolan, who announced her retirement earlier this year after 46 years and more than 1,100 wins, was named Coach of the Year.

### **North Jersey's Players of the Year**

**BASEBALL:** J.T. Luther, Ridgewood

**SOFTBALL:** Savanna McHale, Weehawken

**BOYS SWIMMING:** Aaron Baltaytis, Tenafly

**GIRLS SWIMMING:** Meghan Rourke, Northern Highlands

**BOYS BOWLING:** Andrew Lee, Glen Rock

**GIRLS BOWLING:** Michelle Kim, Fort Lee

**GIRLS BASKETBALL:** Isabella Asencio, Immaculate Heart

**BOYS BASKETBALL:** Dylan Harper, Don Bosco

**GIRLS TENNIS:** Stephanie Yakoff, Fort Lee

**BOYS TENNIS:** Josh Greene, Dwight-Englewood

**BOYS CROSS-COUNTRY:** Owen Horevay, Lakeland

**GIRLS CROSS-COUNTRY:** Morgan Uhlhorn, Lakeland

**GIRLS TRACK ATHLETE:** Abby Dennis, Old Tappan

**GIRLS FIELD ATHLETE:** Layla Giordano, Old Tappan

**BOYS TRACK ATHLETE:** Jack Attali, Demarest

**BOYS FIELD ATHLETE:** George Kalkanis, Mahwah

**GIRLS WRESTLING:** Jenna Filieri, Immaculate Conception

**BOYS WRESTLING:** Jimmy Mullen, St. Joseph

**GYMNASTICS:** Jacqueline Bernardo, Wayne Hills

**BOYS INDOOR TRACK:** Dylan Decambre, Bergen Tech

**GIRLS INDOOR TRACK:** Emma Keating, Pompton Lakes

**ICE HOCKEY:** Daniel Moor, Northern Highlands

**BOYS VOLLEYBALL:** Matthew Peralta, Hackensack

**GIRLS VOLLEYBALL:** Brookelyn Talmadge, Immaculate Heart

**BOYS SOCCER:** Cole Duschang, Ramapo

**GIRLS SOCCER:** Alex Barry, Immaculate Heart

**FIELD HOCKEY:** Krista Lilienthal, Pompton Lakes

**BOYS GOLF:** Harry Cohen, Ramapo

**GIRLS GOLF:** Angelina Kim, Holy Angels

**BOYS LACROSSE:** Matthew Roughgarden, Ridgewood

**GIRLS LACROSSE:** Lindsey Devir, Ridgewood

**FOOTBALL (DEFENSE):** DJ Samuels, Bergen Catholic

**FOOTBALL (OFFENSE):** Aidan Heaney, Old Tappan