



Pearce Named Finalist For National Coach Of The Year Honors

TUPELO, Miss. — Tupelo tennis coach, Payton Pearce, is one of eight coaches across the country named a finalist for the National High School Athletic Coaches Association Coach of the Year.

Pearce, a native of Saltillo who is in his 8th-season with the Golden Wave, led his team to the Class 7A title last season, its first since 2009 and 13th in school history.

“I’m incredibly humbled and honored,” said Pearce, a graduate of Ole Miss who played at Northeast Mississippi Community College. “You get this type of recognition by having great players and support from all levels. Their hard work, commitment and belief in what we’re building every day are what make moments like this possible. I’m blessed to coach outstanding student-athletes who represent our program and Tupelo High School the right way on and off the field.”

Pearce’s selection was based on longevity, service to high school athletics, honors, championship years and winning percentage.

Last week, he collected his 100th-career win after claiming a 7-0 victory against Southaven. Overall, he’s 103-29, including a 59-5 mark the last three seasons. Currently, Tupelo is 6-2 on the year, 4-0 in division play, after shutting out both Lewisburg and DeSoto Central on Wednesday.

The NHSACA was formed in 1965 and is the oldest national high school coaches association in the United States.