

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SPIRIT OF SPORT AWARD

Revised Procedures for 2011-12

The National High School Spirit of Sport Award (hereinafter, the "Award") has evolved to be a great opportunity for state associations and the NFHS to recognize individuals and groups responsible for acts that truly fit into the spirit of high school sports and performing arts activities. Many states have provided nominations (35 in 2011), but the process has not been without questions and some concerns.

Questions have generally evolved around the selection criteria and the process for deciding which nominee should be honored with the national Award. Concerns have centered on perceptions that there may have been more qualified nominees than the nationally honored selection in some years.

Due to the fact that we defer to the state association to determine whether an act by an individual or group in its state should qualify and be nominated for the Award, there may be some who question the viability of some nominations. While those questions and concerns may continue, it is the NFHS staff's interest to further define the Award and provide some logistical steps in the selection process to, hopefully, assist persons in better understanding and accepting the decisions made for the Spirit of Sport Award.

The criteria and process listed below will be utilized for the 2011-12 Award. In Section Meetings next fall, input will be gathered to determine whether the nomination and selection process needs to be further modified to further enhance the Award.

Criteria for the Spirit of Sport Award

For purposes of the Award, the criteria are separated into three categories as listed, in no particular order of importance:

- An individual or group that has demonstrated exemplary sportsmanship and/or citizenship in playing the game as it should be played;
- An individual or group who has exceeded normal expectations in assisting others within the school or community;
- An individual who has overcome adversity or challenging circumstance.

Nomination Process

Each state association is invited and encouraged to submit a nomination for the National High School Spirit of Sport Award. All nominations should be submitted using the National High School Spirit of Sport Award nomination form. The deadline for submission of nominations is February 1, 2012.

States participating in the nomination process have increased from 18 in 2008, 27 in 2009, 28 in 2010, and 35 last year. There are worthy situations in every state that could be recognized. State associations are encouraged to nominate deserving individuals or groups.

Selection Process

A National High School Spirit of Sport Award Selection Committee has been established with one representative from each NFHS Section. That Committee is charged with reading and evaluating each of the nominations, and through a process of discussion and deliberations, makes a determination on a national winner and eight Section-level winners.

That Committee has been meeting via telephone conference call, offering their input and voting on each year's recipients. A planned change for the 2011-12 Award will be to redact the name and state of residence for each of the nominees before forwarding the nominations to the Committee members. While it is unlikely that the location of the nominee would influence the selection process, a more anonymous process might be better accepted by the membership at large. Due to the fact that a Section recipient must be selected, the Section number for each nomination will necessarily be included.

There are three Award criteria categories, and there still likely will be debate about how an individual/group from one category should be considered over an individual/group from a different category. The decision for 2011-12 will be to continue to honor only one winner for the national Award and one winner for each Section Award. Selecting a single recipient for the national and eight Section Awards will continue to be a function of the Committee.

Honoring the Spirit of Sport Winners

The national NFHS Spirit of Sport winner will be honored at the NFHS Summer Meeting in Nashville, TN, at the Opening General Session. Only one Award winner will be recognized.

The Section Award winners will be selected by the National High School Spirit of Sport Award Selection Committee, and the award will be forwarded to the respective state associations for presentation of the Award at a suitable time within that state.