

# 2018-2019 All Arkansas Preps Coaches of the Year

## **Golf – Mike Tucker, Cabot High School**

It was a banner year for the Cabot Panthers boys golf team and Coach Mike Tucker. The Panthers' top four golfers finished in the top 5 of the 6A State Tournament and three of those players qualified for the Overall tournament. Junior Caleb Miller was one of four players to advance into a sudden-death playoff. Seniors Blaine Calhoun and Connor Gaunt placed fifth and sixth, respectively.

## **Tennis – Darin Phelan, Fayetteville High School**

Fayetteville was a clear winner in the Class 6A girls tennis state tournament and in the Overall tournament. Junior Mary Houston won the singles title in both the state and Overall events while the doubles team of Grace Coleman and Yasmine Humbert did the same. Coach Darin Phelan guided the program to its second consecutive state title.

## **Cross Country – Mike Power, Bentonville High School**

Bentonville boys coach Mike Power's team dominated over a sloppy course at the Oaklawn infield to earn its second consecutive state title and its sixth title since 2009. The Tigers placed five runners in the Class 6A Top 10 and defeated Fayetteville by five points for the title.

## **Volleyball – Laura Crow, Conway High School**

Laura Crow coached the Conway Lady Wampus Cats to their first state volleyball title in 20 years. Conway finished 29-7-1 overall and finished second to Fort Smith Southside in the 6A-Central but the Lady Cats defeated Southside in the state championship match in four games. Conway's only other state volleyball title came in 1998.

## **Football – JR Eldridge, Arkadelphia High School**

J.R. Eldridge was coming off a 2017 season in which he led Arkadelphia to a Class 4A state championship. However, the 2018 season didn't get off to a great start for the Badgers, who started 0-5 overall and 0-2 in the 7-4A Conference. But Eldridge helped lift the Badgers out of their early-season hole, winning 10 consecutive games to earn the school's second consecutive state championship and fourth overall. Arkadelphia became the first team in state history to defeat four No. 1 seeds in the state playoffs, knocking off Warren, Stuttgart, Shiloh Christian and Joe T. Robinson.

## **Boys Swim/Dive – Mary Jo Heye, Central High School**

Little Rock Central won the Class 6A state championship and did so without an individual state champion. Guided by Heye, the Tigers had seven second-place finishes. Central outpointed Conwy 437-402 for its second consecutive state championship.

## **Girls Swim/Dive – Nick Nersesian, Bentonville High School**

The 2019 season was one of redemption for Bentonville, which saw its four-year state championship run end in 2018. With the leadership of Nersesian, the Tigers outpointed Little Rock Central 388-328. Bentonville picked up two individual state championships, as well as two second-place and three third-place finishes, respectively.

## **Wrestling – Jerry Evans, Searcy High School**

Searcy won its first state team championship by outpointing Hot Springs Lakeside and Greenwood in Class 5A. Under the leadership of this veteran coach, the Lions had seven second-place finishers at the state wrestling tournament Feb. 23 in Little Rock. Searcy had finished in the top five at the state wrestling tournament the previous three seasons, but in 2019, the Lions broke through to get on top of the podium.

### **Boys Basketball – David Clark, Marion High School**

In his first year as a head coach, David Clark led Marion to a Class 5A state championship. The Patriots finished 25-3 and did not lose a game to an Arkansas opponent. Marion completed the season with a 19-game winning streak, knocking off Little Rock Hall — where Clark spent the previous five years as an assistant — in overtime. Marion averaged 68.0 points a game while allowing only 51.1.

### **Girls Basketball – Stan Fowler, Batesville High School**

Stan Fowler coached the Batesville Lady Pioneers to their first state title since 1992 when they knocked off Berryville in the Class 4A title game earlier this month. Batesville finished 4A-3 Conference play with a 14-0 record and compiled a 29-3 overall record. The Lady Pioneers averaged 68.3 points a game while giving up only 47.3.

### **Track – Grover Garrison, Sylvan Hills High School**

Sylvan Hills won its third consecutive state championship this season under the leadership of Garrison. The Lady Bears picked up individual championships from Aliya Hatton in the 110 and 300 hurdles, and Mia Heard in the long jump. The team also won the 400 and 1,600-meter relay races.