

The National Football Foundation CHAPTER NETWORK



Vol. 3, Issue 4 June 8, 2007

Building Leaders Through Football

Scholar-Athlete Achieves Hero Status

Kellen Kiilsgaard, a 2007 scholar-athlete with the **King County (Wash.) Chapter**, has distinguished himself throughout his high school career with a 3.95 GPA and as a All-State two-sport athlete at Auburn High School. Recently, he stepped into the realm of hero when he rescued a 250-pound man and his 7 year-old daughter from choppy seas while vacationing in Maui, Hawaii.

"We take great pride in all of our scholar-athletes, but when we see one of them recognized for something like this it really means a lot to us," said King County President **Walt Hunt**. "Kellen is an amazing young man, and we look forward to watching him achieve many more successes."

Kiilsgaard, who plays quarterback and free safety, told the *Seattle Times* that he did not feel like a hero and instinct took over. He added, however, that ordeal had made him feel like he had just played four quarters of football as he had to swim about 50 yards each way to get each of the floundering swimmers to shore.

"There are a few moments in high-school athletics that I'll never forget, but doing this means a lot more than anything I



Kellen Kiilsgaard

could do out there on the field," said Kiilsgaard to the *Seattle Times*. "It's in a different part of your heart than an athletic accomplishment."

Vacationing with family and classmates, Kiilsgaard never found out the names of the rescued.

"We just went our separate ways," he told the *Seattle Times*. "It was a good feeling. I was part of keeping a family intact. I never really pictured myself being put in a position to save anyone's life. I saw two people out there struggling and reacted. Anyone would've done what I did."

At 6 feet and 217 pounds, Killsgaard runs the 40 in 4.53 and has accepted a football scholarship at Stanford where he also expects to play baseball. He rushed for 23 touchdowns and passed for 13 this year, leading his team to the state semifinals. In the community, he volunteers with the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. ■

CHAPTER PLAY-BY-PLAY

Former Notre Dame offensive tackle **Aaron Taylor** accepted the **Moose Krause Chapter's** Distinguished American Award April 18 as the chapter honored 39 student-athletes from 19 South Bend, Ind. area high schools.

Known for his All-America career at Notre Dame and a Super Bowl Championship with the Green Bay Packers, Taylor has pursued a vigorous charitable agenda since retiring from the NFL in 1999. He founded the Aaron Taylor IMPACT Fund to raise money for a wide range of causes, including providing aid to tsunami-ravaged Sri Lanka to working to offset health-care costs for former NFL players who do not have the medical benefits he does.

Three student-



Aaron Taylor

athletes, who were honored at the event, ranked No. 1 academically in their class: **Nick Yoder**, a tight end/defensive end from Concord HS; **Andrew Wiand** from Riley HS; and **Shawn Yoder** from NorthWood HS. Former Notre Dame quarterback star **Tony Rice** served as the dinner's

honorary chairman. ■

Jim Ewan, the head coach at Chandler High School, accepted the Outstanding Coaches Award at the 26th Annual Valley of the Sun Chapter Banquet in Scottsdale, Ariz. Ewan helped bring the NFF's Play It Smart program to Chandler in 2002. His early support of the program has helped build Play It Smart into one of the most comprehensive and effective youth development programs in the country today. Ewan joins an impressive list of past coaches to accept the award, including Hall of Fame coach **Frank Kush**.

The chapter honored 22 Arizona high school football players and a pair of area college players with scholarship awards. **Eddie Basha**, CEO of Bashas' Supermarkets, accepted the chapter's Distinguished Arizonan Award, and **Erik Widmark**, president of the Grand Canyon Games, claimed the Chapter Leadership Award.

Continued next page...



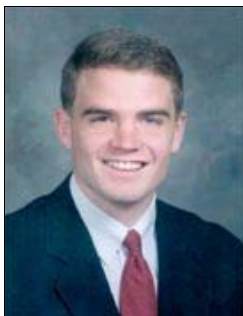
Eddie Basha



Ray Powell received the Valley of the Sun Chapter's award for excellence in officiating, and NFF Board member **Jack Lengyel** took the podium as the evening's keynote speaker, talking about the recent film "We Are Marshall" that tells the story of Lengyel's efforts to rebuild the Marshall football program as the first team's first head coach after the tragic 1970 plane crash that killed nearly every player and coach. ■

With more than 300 people in attendance, the **Westchester (New York) Chapter** held its 34th Annual Awards Banquet, recognizing the accomplishments of 36 scholar-athletes while distributing five scholarships, which brings the total awarded by the chapter since its inception to more than \$325,000.

The chapter provides honorable mention recognition to the majority of its honorees while reserving top accolades for its prestigious Golden Dozen. In memory of **Chris Mello**, a past Golden Dozen Scholar-Athlete who died during the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the chapter has established the Chris Mello Scholar-Athlete Award.



Chris Mello

This year Chris father, **Doug Mello**, a chapter board member, gave a touching tribute to his son, presenting the award to **Matt Gray** of Pelham High School. ■

Wyoming Chapter Hosts Another Successful Banquet

The Wyoming Chapter presented a total of \$19,000 in scholarships to 13 of the state's top prep scholar-athletes and two players from the University of Wyoming at its 13th Annual Awards Banquet in Casper.

Play-by-play announcer **Dave Walsh** and analyst **Kevin McKinney** received the chapter's Outstanding Contribution to Amateur Football Award for their work as the "broadcast voices" of the Wyoming Cowboys.

"Dave Walsh may have the most recognized voice in the state of Wyoming and one of the most famous in UW sports history," said chapter president **Mike Schutte** in presenting the award. "Both Dave and Kevin have been great ambassadors for UW throughout the United States and are immensely respected in their profession."

Former University of Wyoming Cowboy quarterback, **Jim "The Mississippi Gambler" Walden** delivered the keynote address while UW Head Coach **Joe Glenn** and assistant **Bryan Applewhite** also addressed the crowd of 371 people.

Seth Linn earned top honors as the chapter's "Scholar Athlete of the Year." Linn, who played running back and linebacker as Big Piney High School claimed the state championship in his sophomore and senior years, took home a \$2,000 scholarship.



The 2007 Wyoming Chapter Scholar-Athlete Class

A team captain, **Eli Brost** earned awards for their courage and perseverance, and high school student **Eli Brost** of Upton received special recognition for his work as an aspiring radio broadcaster. ■

Other awards included: The Greatest UW Football Fans, The Greatest HS Football Fan, Football Coach Career Achievement Award, Football Official Career Achievement Award, and the Outstanding Contribution to Amateur Football Award. Three additional prep play-



Top Honors for Seth Linn

Chapter Lauds The Best From Fairfield County, Conn.

Around 200 people attended **The Ralph Desantis (Fairfield County, Conn.) Chapter** annual banquet to witness 35 scholar-athletes earn recognition for their combined achievements on and off the field with \$4,000 distributed in scholarships.

The chapter honored New Canaan High School for their 2006 State Class M Championship along with the team's head coach, **Lou Marinelli** who earned FCIAC "Coach of the Year" honors. Marinelli claims



(L-R): **Howard Vandersea**, parents **Mr. & Mrs. Garrity**, Scholar-Athlete **John Garrity** from New Canaan HS who will be attending MIT, and Coach **Lou Marinelli**.

five state titles and 218 career wins. Marinelli has been named one of 8 finalists for "National Coach of the Year". The winner will be announced at the National High School Coaches Convention on June 28th in Milwaukee. ■