



NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026

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The TSSAA Legislative Council approved several significant changes during its latest session, including changes to the Recruiting Rule and the Transfer Rule. A proposal to allow coaches to work with their own children during the offseason was approved. The Council also modified requirements for classified employees, removing the NFHS First Aid course mandate while maintaining the Fundamentals of Coaching certification.

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[Middle School Athletic Director honored for Distinguished Service](#)

There was a time when Scott Carroll worked in ink. Once he shifted career paths, Carroll stamped his mark on youth athletics in his native Cleveland, Tennessee. Now, after more than three decades' service to public education, Carroll has been honored as a Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Distinguished Service Award winner for the 2025-26 academic year.

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Call for Submissions

We want to include your thoughts in the monthly TSSAA Newsletter! Do you have 50-500 words to share on the topic of **sportsmanship**? We welcome submissions from principals, athletic administrators, coaches and students! Consider sharing your thoughts, essays or even poems for an upcoming issue. Please send submissions in Microsoft Word format to mgillespie@tssaa.org.

TSSAA continues its support of the **National SAT/ACT Prep Project** through the NFHS and eKnowledge which allows any Tennessee student to receive a 95% discount on SAT or ACT prep courses. This is a community-service, non-profit project and all student fees are reinvested to improve the program and reach more families. The project has more than 45,000 five-star reviews and has already assisted nearly 300,000 families. Learn more at <https://eknowledge.com/TSSAA>.



Sports News

General News

Eight new members inducted into the TSSAA Hall of Fame

Two administrators, three coaches, two officials, and one contributor make up the 2026 class

April 13, 2026

Eight new members were inducted into the TSSAA Hall of Fame at the annual luncheon at the Student Union Building on the campus of Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro on Monday, April 13, 2026.

Two administrators, three coaches, two officials, and one contributor were inducted at the annual gathering of those selected since the process began in 1982.

The members of the 2026 class are: **Mike Ellson**, administrator from Nashville; **Gene Menees**, administrator from Madison; **Rob Black**, coach from Knoxville; **Robert "Bobby" Broyles**, coach from Chuckey; **Eddie Courtney**, coach from Knoxville; **Ken Melton**, official from McMinnville; **Charles Watkins**, official from Nashville; and **Rick Colbert**, contributor from Brentwood.

The Hall of Fame luncheon is to not only honor the new inductees and their families, but to honor all past inductees into the TSSAA Hall of Fame.

Mike Ellson was recognized for more than three decades of exemplary service as an athletic administrator, educator, and leader in interscholastic athletics.

Ellson earned a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from Welch College in 1987 and a Master of Education in Administration and Supervision from Tennessee State University in 1994. He has achieved the highest professional distinctions in athletic administration, including Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA) and Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA) through the National Interscholastic

Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA), while completing extensive leadership training at the state and national levels.

In 1987, during only the third year of the school's existence, Ellson founded the athletic program at Christ Presbyterian Academy, serving as the school's first Athletic Director for more than 30 years. He also served as the first boys' and girls' basketball coach in the school's history and held a combined record of 259-170.

Under his leadership, the athletic department at CPA expanded to nearly 60 athletic teams and over 70 coaches, offering a comprehensive and competitive program for both middle and high school students. He also served as Department Chairman for K-12 Physical Education and Wellness from 1992-2012, and was instrumental in developing sports medicine, concussion management, and facility growth initiatives.

Beyond the school level, Ellson has provided influential leadership statewide and nationally. He has served as President and Executive Director of the Tennessee Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (TIAAA), a National Faculty Member for the NIAAA Leadership Training Institute, and an Ex-Officio member of the TSSAA Board of Control representing TIAAA.

Gene Menees was honored for his 34 years of distinguished service as an athletic administrator with the TSSAA. His career reflects an enduring commitment to student-athletes, sportsmanship, and the integrity of interscholastic athletics across the state of Tennessee.

Menees joined the TSSAA staff in 1991, serving as an Assistant Executive Director until his retirement in August of 2025. As the association's administrator for baseball and basketball, he provided leadership and oversight for state championship events, assigned officials for postseason tournaments, organized and directed officials' camps, and conducted rules interpretation meetings. He worked closely with officials, coaches, supervisors, and school administrators, earning statewide respect for his professionalism, fairness, and deep knowledge of the games.

In addition to his work with baseball and basketball, Menees oversaw the registration of all officials statewide and was responsible for the association's sportsmanship initiative, promoting ethical conduct and respect throughout interscholastic competition. His influence extended well beyond his assigned sports, as he faithfully served the membership in countless capacities and played a vital role in the daily operations of the TSSAA.

Prior to his tenure at TSSAA, Menees was a teacher and coach at Donelson Christian Academy and Davidson Academy in Nashville. A standout baseball player, he competed at Vanderbilt University and was drafted by the San Diego Padres, later spending seven years in professional baseball, including time with the Nashville Sounds after signing with the Cincinnati Reds organization. He also officiated collegiate basketball until 2018.

In 2016, Menees received the prestigious National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Citation Award, recognizing his national impact on high school athletics. His legacy is one of service, mentorship, and unwavering dedication to student-athletes, coaches, and officials.

Rob Black's legacy is synonymous with Fulton High School football, where his lifelong dedication spans from serving as a childhood ball boy for his father to becoming a state championship-winning head coach. A 1984 Fulton graduate and three-sport athlete, Black played football and baseball at Carson-Newman University before returning to his alma mater to begin a coaching tenure that would last over three decades.

After serving as an assistant and Offensive Coordinator for 19 years, Black was named Head Coach in 2011. Over the next 11 seasons, he compiled an outstanding record of 103-36, establishing himself as one of only sixteen coaches in Knox County history to surpass 100 career wins. His leadership defined a dynasty, guiding the Falcons to three consecutive Class 4A state championships in 2012, 2013, and 2014. This dominant era featured a 37-game winning streak and two undefeated seasons. His 2013 and 2014 squads remain the top two scoring teams in TSSAA history, with the 2013 team setting a state record of 862 points.

Beyond his head coaching accolades, Black's influence encompasses the program's entire modern history. As an offensive coordinator, he helped secure state titles in 2003, 2004, and 2006, meaning he was a pivotal part of all six of the school's state championships. His honors include being named the 2012 State Coach of the Year and induction into the Greater Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame.

Coach Black currently serves as an athletic director at Fulton High School, along with fellow TSSAA Hall of Famer Jody Wright. The football field at Fulton is named after Coach Black's father, the late Bob Black, who is a member of the 2008 Hall of Fame class.

Robert "Bobby" Broyles is a distinguished figure in Tennessee high school basketball, celebrated for his remarkable success and longevity as a head coach in Greene County. His career spans decades at Chuckey High School, Chuckey-Doak High School, and South Greene High School, where he compiled an impressive record of 542 wins and 350 losses leading both boys' and girls' programs.

As a boys' head coach, Broyles amassed 407 career wins against 277 losses. His leadership guided his teams to two District Tournament Championships, three District Runner-up finishes, and eleven Regional Tournament appearances. His tenure was marked by high-performance teams, with 10 of his squads securing 20 or more wins in a single season, and two achieving 30-win seasons. Notably, his 1961-62 Chuckey-Doak team set a school record with 35 wins.

Broyles also made a significant impact as a girls' head coach, recording 135 wins and 73 losses. His teams earned three District Tournament Runner-up finishes and made five Regional Tournament appearances. He later served as a long-time assistant coach, contributing to state tournament runs at South Greene and Chuckey-Doak.

When Chuckey High School closed due to consolidation, the superintendent garnered him with the task of helping transition two high schools (Doak High School and Chuckey High School) into one to become “Chuckey-Doak”. He coached many of the sports when it first opened and basically established the athletic program there.

His legacy continues at the school, where his sons, Steven and Sam, serve as the principal and head boys’ basketball coach, respectively.

Eddie Courtney’s name is synonymous with Farragut High School football, where his influence has spanned nearly half a century. Serving the school for 45 years as a teacher and coach, and leading the program as head coach since 1996, Courtney has built a legacy defined by integrity, resilience, and championship excellence.

Courtney boasts an impressive career record of 204-121, ranking him fifth all-time among active Tennessee high school head coaches as of 2023. His tenure at the helm of the Admirals includes four Region Championships, twelve Quarterfinal appearances, and the crowning achievement of the 2016 Class 5A State Championship. He has coached close to 50 All-State players, 3 All-Americans, and six TSSAA Mr. Football finalists. His ability to develop talent is evident, having sent over 200 players to play collegiately, with seven reaching the NFL.

However, Courtney’s impact extends far beyond the scoreboard. Known for his "BAM: Be a Man" program, he prioritizes molding young athletes into responsible men, husbands, and fathers. His personal resilience has served as a powerful lesson to his players; Courtney has battled cancer twice without wavering in his commitment to his team, inspiring the community and earning the 2006 Knoxville News-Sentinel Courage Award.

His contributions have been widely recognized, with accolades including the 2017 Pat Summitt Ignite Greatness Award and induction into the Tennessee Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2021.

Coach Courtney stepped down as the head coach of the Admirals in 2024, but he continues to serve as an assistant coach under his son, Geoff.

For nearly half a century, **Ken Melton** has been a cornerstone of integrity and professionalism within the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA). Beginning his officiating career in 1977 immediately after graduating from Lebanon High School, Melton has dedicated over 48 years to high school athletics as an official, assigner, and supervisor.

Melton’s on-field resume is distinguished, spanning 25 years of active officiating that included working four state football championship games and three state basketball championship games. However, his influence grew even further as he transitioned into leadership, serving as the assigner and supervisor for the North Central Officials Association for over two decades. Melton is credited with being the first assigner in his area to implement the internet-based assigning program Arbiter Sports, a system now standard across the state.

His contributions have earned him numerous accolades, including the A.F. Bridges Sportsmanship Award (2001-2002), and the TSSAA Distinguished Service Award in 2021, which he received alongside his wife and fellow official, Michelle Melton. The two also received recognition from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

Melton’s induction would continue a proud family legacy; his father, the late Bill Melton, was inducted into the TSSAA Hall of Fame in 1998. Described by colleagues as the embodiment of "Class, Character, and Integrity," Melton is revered not just for his technical expertise but for his mentorship of countless officials. Mr. Melton is defined by being fair, consistent, and approachable, leaving an indelible mark on the quality of high school sports in Tennessee.

Charles E. Watkins, Jr., has dedicated over half a century to the world of sports officiating, establishing himself as a pillar of integrity and excellence within the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA). A registered official in basketball, volleyball, baseball, and softball, Watkins’ career began with the Metropolitan Nashville Parks department and flourished into a 50-year legacy that touched every level of the game.

Watkins officiated countless District, Regional, and Sectional tournaments, capping his high school on-court career with two TSSAA State Basketball Tournament appearances. However, his impact as a leader is perhaps his greatest contribution. Serving as a TSSAA Supervisor for the Middle Tennessee Basketball Officials Association (MTBOA) for 28 years, he revolutionized official training. He was instrumental in developing the first sanctioned TSSAA Basketball Officiating Camp at MTSU, a model that established the mandatory camp requirements now standard for state tournament selection.

His expertise transcended high school sports. Watkins spent 17 years as a Division 1 collegiate official across eight conferences, including the SEC and OVC. His resume includes NCAA Tournament assignments, NIT games, and even international exhibitions in Tokyo. He was also a charter member of the SEC Baseball Umpires Staff.

Watkins is celebrated not just for his whistle, but for his willingness to sit in the bleachers with a pen in hand, critiquing and guiding the next generation. A 1962 graduate of Cameron High School, he was inducted into the Metro Nashville Public Schools Sports Hall of Fame in 2025.

For over four decades, **Rick Colbert** has served as the legal counsel for the TSSAA. During that time, he has navigated the complexities of educational policy, labor relations, and the regulation of interscholastic athletics. A graduate of the University of Tennessee College of Law, Colbert joined the Nashville legal community in 1981 at Cornelius & Collins, where he practiced alongside his predecessor and fellow TSSAA Hall of Famer, Charles Hampton White.

Rick Colbert's legacy is defined by his unwavering defense of the TSSAA's authority to regulate and maintain competitive equity. He became the face of the association during the landmark Brentwood Academy litigation, a decade-long constitutional odyssey that reached the U.S. Supreme Court twice. In the 2001 case, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Brentwood Academy, sending the case back to the Court of Appeals; however, the 2007 unanimous victory reinforced the association's right to enforce anti-recruiting rules as a condition of voluntary membership. These influential rulings protected the educational mission of high school sports across the United States.

Colbert's counsel has ensured that the TSSAA's rules are legally sound, and that its disciplinary actions withstand judicial scrutiny. This regulatory framework is built upon several core rules designed to maintain competitive equity and prioritize academic achievement over athletic success.

Beyond the courtroom, Colbert has been a pivotal force in legislative strategy and administrative fairness. He successfully worked with state legislators to amend the Public Records Act, ensuring student-athletes' private academic and medical information remained shielded from public disclosure. Colbert continues to provide steady leadership as the TSSAA navigates modern challenges such as NIL and transfer eligibility.

Colbert's expertise has been utilized on a national level, as he has been chosen to speak at multiple legal seminars for the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). He is heavily relied upon by other state associations for his legal advice in the ever-changing world of high school athletics.

Colbert is a partner at Thompson Burton PLLC. He also represents educators across the state in his long-time role as outside counsel for the Tennessee Education Association. His practice includes representation of private business and individuals in complex litigation in state and federal courts in disputes involving employment, contracts, and property. A Fellow of the Nashville Bar Foundation with a 5.0 Peer Review rating, Rick Colbert's career represents an unparalleled commitment to the integrity, stability, and legal architecture of Tennessee high school athletics.



General News

Meeting Agendas/Minutes News

TSSAA Legislative Council makes multiple changes to the bylaws

Revisions to the transfer rule and recruiting rule highlight actions taken by the governing body

April 14, 2026

The TSSAA Legislative Council approved several significant changes during its latest session, including changes to the Recruiting Rule and the Transfer Rule. A proposal to allow coaches to work with their own children during the offseason was approved. The change allows coaches to coach their children in the preseason and offseason provided no other students from their school are on the team. The Council also modified requirements for classified employees, removing the NFHS First Aid course mandate while maintaining the Fundamentals of Coaching certification.

The council voted to approve the proposed change to the Football Sports Calendar to remove the requirement that the two days of football team against team competition that can take place in June must take place in Tennessee. Additionally, the council eased scheduling restrictions by passing a proposal that removes alumni games from a school's official regular-season contest count.

Several were denied or delayed for further review. The council denied a measure that would have formally defined an "athletic record" as any participation at the varsity or sub-varsity level and rejected a tiered disqualification structure for ejections, asking the state office to research what other states are doing and bring that information back to a future meeting. A proposal aimed at preventing "schedule manipulation" following coach or player suspensions was tabled. The session concluded with discussions on the Amateur Rule, specifically focusing on ensuring student compensation is not tied to participation at a specific member school.

1. Voted to approve the Minutes from the December 11, 2025, meeting without reading since members had been sent a copy to review.
2. Voted to implement the clarification on TSSAA Sports Calendar to go into effect immediately, allowing volleyball, basketball, baseball, softball, lacrosse, football, flag football, and soccer coaches to coach their own children in the preseason and offseason, provided that there are no other students from their school on the team.
3. Voted to remove the requirement for classified employees to take the NFHS First Aid, Health and Safety Course but keep the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course requirement for classified employees.
4. Voted to approve the revised proposal regarding pre-season events concerning Article I Section 8 TSSAA Sports Calendar (Scrimmage Rule) and Article IV Section 10 (Jamborees).

5. Voted to table the proposed change to Article II, Section 12d (Athletic Coaching Link) of the TSSAA Bylaws, then subsequently voted to deny the proposal.
6. Voted to deny the proposed definition of athletic record that would have defined a student as having an "athletic record" if the student has played in an interscholastic contest at the varsity, junior varsity, ninth grade, or any other level.
7. Voted to approve the proposed changes to the Transfer Rule and gave the state office permission to make editorial changes to the "rezoning" provision and the "transition provision" to provide more clarity.
8. Voted to approve the recommended revisions to the Recruiting Rule.
9. Voted to approve the proposed change to the Football Sports Calendar to remove the requirement that the two days of football team against team competition that can take place in June must take place in Tennessee.
10. Voted to approve setting deadlines for schools to join TSSAA based on whether they are fielding their own teams or participating in a cooperative program only.
11. Voted to deny as written the proposal to create a tiered disqualification structure for ejections and gave the state office the opportunity to research how other states handle the issue.
12. Voted to accept the Alumni Games Proposal so that alumni games no longer count as an official contest toward the number of regular season contests allowed.
13. Voted to table the proposal concerning suspension accountability and schedule manipulation that would prevent schools from adding or substituting contests in their schedule after a coach or player is suspended.
14. Discussed summer participation's impact on eligibility for transfer students.
15. Discussed the Amateur Rule and potential language clarifying that compensation must not be tied to a student's participation in interscholastic athletics at a particular member school.
16. Discussed the period of ineligibility for transfer students and how other states handle it differently from TSSAA.
17. Voted to adjourn.

Agenda and Attachments



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Sports News

General News

Middle School Athletic Director honored for Distinguished Service

Cleveland's Scott Carroll has spent more than three decades in education

May 4, 2026

There was a time when Scott Carroll worked in ink.

Once he shifted career paths, Carroll stamped his mark on youth athletics in his native Cleveland, Tennessee.

Now, after more than three decades' service to public education, including an enduring run as Cleveland Middle School's athletics director, Carroll has been honored as a Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Distinguished Service Award winner for the 2025-26 academic year.

It's a drastic change from his own playing career being ended due to injury at then-Carson-Newman College and going to work for his father, the late Ralph Carroll, at Carroll Printing.

"This is truly an honor, because I've just been blessed to work with great coaches, be around great kids, teach and be a part of a great school system," Carroll, also CMS assistant principal, said. "I get to work with kids every day, and that's the main reason I do it."

"One, I think it keeps me young. I can retire at any time, I've got 33 years in, but I just love being around the kids and think that's what it's all about. I have a passion for Cleveland, Cleveland schools and have been a Blue Raider my whole life. I want to see it continue to grow and get better."

Such a proclamation is no insignificant endeavor for Carroll, who already has helped serve a foundational role in Tennessee's dawn of officially recognized middle school state championships and overseen a half-dozen TMSAA state titles at Cleveland.

Cleveland has claimed championships in softball, track, twice in wrestling and two in basketball – one apiece for boys and girls.

Heady stuff on a path that almost didn't happen after Carroll's truncated Carson-Newman career and has its origins in youth-league sports in the Cleveland area.



Scott Carroll

“I went back to work at dad’s printing company and started coaching Little League. I had a friend who needed help coaching the football team,” said Carroll, quick to praise the support of his wife, Melinda, and noting his father’s service in World War II. “I said, ‘All right, I’m not doing anything.’ When his son aged out, I took over that Little League football team, then added baseball. But my dad was always my inspiration.

“He said, ‘This is what you love, go back to school, get your degree and do it.’ Donnie Yates was my mentor in athletics. He got me hired, one of my former teachers was principal at Cleveland Middle at the time, and he said I hope you’ve changed a lot since high school. I said, ‘Well, I’ve grown up a lot.’”

The proof is in a decorated career: athletics director for 31 years, nearly 35 years helping coach football, a quarter-century with Cleveland High School’s baseball program and another decade with wrestling.

Too, Cleveland Middle School has grown from offering four sports to now fielding more than 20 teams.

“I would hope kind of my legacy with TIAAA and TSSAA is that I’ve tried to emphasize middle school sports, because they deserve as much recognition as the high schools,” Carroll said.

TSSAA proudly salutes Scott Carroll for his more than three decades of dedication to education-based athletics and student-athletes.

AUTHOR

John Brice