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Longtime Wilson swimming/diving coach inducted into the National High School Sports Hall of Fame

Roy Snyder has been coaching for over 60 years.

MECHANICSBURG – In 1964, Roy Snyder started the swimming program at Wilson High School in West Lawn, Pennsylvania, and he remains the boys swimming coach 60 years later at the age of 86.

In his first 59 years at Wilson High School, Snyder led his teams to 623 wins and only 114 losses, a remarkable 84 winning percentage. He has won 40 Berks League championships, 24 Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) District 3 titles and four PIAA AAA State Championships.

Under Snyder's leadership, Wilson has had more than 300 All-American swimmers. Among those 300 were six Olympic trials qualifiers, two national high school record-holders and one Olympian Kristy Kowal, a silver medalist in the 200 breaststroke at the 2000 Games in Sydney, Australia.

In an amazing 20 of Snyder's 59 seasons, his boys' teams have been undefeated in the regular season. He has coached 15 individual PIAA state champions, and in a consistency accomplishment akin to Cal Ripken, Wilson High School has had a team represented at every PIAA State Swimming Championship since 1965; Snyder's second year and a streak of 58 consecutive years.

During his amazing career at Wilson, Snyder has filled other roles at the school. For 12 years he was the water polo coach, compiling a 125-31 record and coaching 20 all-Americans. He was the National Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association (NISCA) National Water Polo chair from 1978 to 1983. As chair, Snyder worked with the NFHS to develop the first rules book and instituted the All-American selection process still used today. In 1984, he added the duties of athletic director at Wilson and served in that position for 20 years.



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Snyder previously has been inducted into several other halls of fame, including the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame, Berks County Sports Hall of Fame, Wilson Athletic Hall of Fame, East Stroudsburg University Athletic Hall of Fame, Pennsylvania Aquatic Hall of Fame, Berks County Aquatic Hall of Fame, NISCA Hall of Fame and now, the National High School Sports Hall of Fame on July 1, 2024 at the NFHS Summer Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. Snyder was part of the 41st class inducted, alongside official David Gore, administrators Mike Colbrese and Marie Ishida, coaches Paula Kirkland, Gary Rankin and Ronald Vincent, athletes Dot Ford Burrow, Joe Mauer, Takeo Spikes and Tyrone Wheatley.



left to right: Wilson Swimming/Diving Coach Roy Snyder and Dr. Robert Lombardi, PIAA Executive Director honoring Snyder with the National High School Sports Hall of Fame medal.

He also was Pennsylvania Swimming Coach of the Year and Berks County Swimming Coach of the Year on numerous occasions, and the swimming facility at Wilson High School is aptly named the Roy G. Snyder Natatorium.

“In addition to Roy’s impressive coaching skills, he is a mentor and a role model for all of his swimmers,” said Drew Kaufmann, director of athletics for the Wilson School District. “He is known for instilling discipline, teamwork and sportsmanship, and for creating an environment where his swimmers not only excel in the pool, but also develop into responsible, confident and resilient individuals.”

During his induction, Snyder thanked his family for their unconditional love and support. His wife of 57 years, Mary Jane, passed away from brain cancer in 2015. His son Mike and daughter Alison both swam for their father and continue to be his biggest supporters.



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Snyder pictured at the 2023-24 PIAA Swimming and Diving Championships awarding medals to Wilson student-athletes.

Since the inception of the National High School Sports Hall of Fame in 1982, Pennsylvania has had 11 inductees. That ranks the state tied for 17th nationally. Former inductees include athletes Dick Groat (1996), Billy Owens (2011), and Arnold Palmer (1986), inducted coaches are Tom Barringer (1982), Sue Butz-Stavin (2023), Joe Cesari (1992), Joseph Diminick (1995), Jackson Horner (1994), Roy Snyder (2024) and Arthur Weiss (1991) and inducted official Mario Donnangelo (2000).

More from the NFHS induction ceremony can be found [here](#).

Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association

Beginning in Pittsburgh, on December 29, 1913, PIAA was given the privilege of serving its member schools and registered officials by establishing policies and adopting contest rules that emphasize the educational values of interscholastic athletics, promote safe and sportsmanlike competition, and provide uniform standards for all interscholastic levels of competition.