

Alton High School inducts another class into Redbird Athletic Hall of Fame

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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GODFREY – Like many schools throughout the region, **Alton High School** has a vast and storied athletic legacy. Over the years, many athletes have helped forge the reputation of the Redbirds as one of the top programs throughout the St. Louis region.

Since 2011, AHS has honored the many contributions of teams and individuals to the program with an athletic Hall of Fame. This year's class was inducted in a halftime ceremony during the Redbirds' Alton Tipoff Classic opener against Northwest Academy of St. Louis recently.

The class includes the 1958-59 basketball team, the 1968 football team, Larry Ceppenati, Dave Delawder, Gary Hagen, Frank Holmes, George Hunt, Mike Jeffries, Larry Smith and Ed Yonkus. They join a distinguished group that includes the 1951 baseball team that finished second in the state, the undefeated and untied 1970 football team (just prior to the establishment of the IHSA football playoffs); coaches like Mary Bowling and Stan McAfoos; and athletes such as Charles “Dink” Black, Camie and Carrie Bechtold, Bobby Everage, Leroy “Fats” Harrison, Bill “Red” Schmitt, Archie Kodros and Katie Wilson.

Delawder was inducted into the shrine as the first Friend of Athletics; the Galesburg native grew up around sport both at Galesburg High and at Knox College. At Alton, he kept scores and statistics for the basketball team and also established a program to help

Redbird athletes who needed tutoring in the classroom, a program that was very successful.

“I enjoyed working with the kids,” Delawder said. “The program we had to help the kids in the classroom really worked well; we went something like two years without losing an athlete to eligibility issues.

“We used kids from the National Honor Society to help the kids who needed it, and both the NHS kids and the athletes really enjoyed the opportunities.”

Delawder was also a basketball coach at East Junior High, where his assistant went on to become one of the top college basketball officials in the nation – none other than Ed Hightower.

“Working with Ed was great,” Delawder said. “He is a class guy.”

Norm Iman was a coach on the 1968 football team that was inducted into the hall. “We had good kids who worked hard,” Iman said. “They came from good families and understood what it was like to work hard and achieve success.”



The game of football has changed tremendously from what it was like when Iman coached. “It's a much different game now,” Iman said. “It's a much more athletic game, and there's all sorts of camps that players can go to to get better, better food, doctors who take care of things. It's changed from when I was coaching.”

Iman was a coach under Yonkus, who coached the Redbirds from 1960-70 and led Alton to two unbeaten seasons, 1968 and 1970.

