



February 2, 2026

Nat Newell to receive Distinguished Media Service Award

A veteran sports editor at Indiana's largest newspaper, Nat Newell of the IndyStar is the recipient of the 2025-26 IHSAA Distinguished Media Service Award for District 2.

Newell will be honored Thursday evening (Feb. 5) at Fishers High School when the top-ranked Tigers host conference rival Westfield in boys basketball action. IHSAA Commissioner Paul Neidig and Sports Information Director Jason Wille will make the presentation.

Originally from Massachusetts and having previously worked for the Anderson (S.C.) Independent Mail and (Columbia, S.C.) State, Nat joined IndyStar in October 2003 covering high school sports on the north side of Indianapolis.

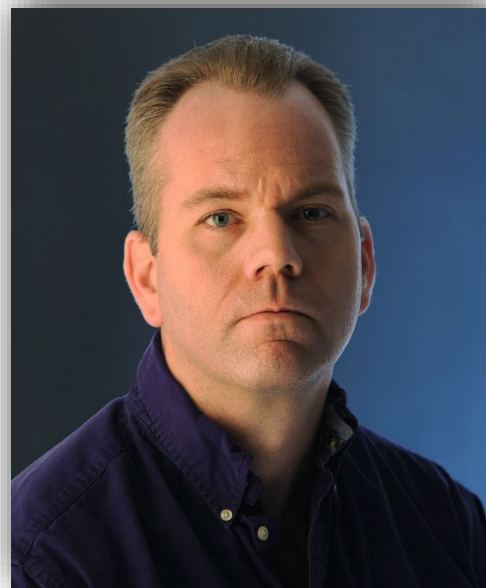
He was named high school sports editor in 2010 and served in the position through 2013. He was promoted to IndyStar's Colts, Pacers, and IndyCar editor from 2013 to 2022 before being named sports editor in 2022 and continues in that role today.

"Telling the stories of high school athletes anywhere is a special role, but there's nowhere in the country that it's as important as it is in Indiana," Newell says. "You think Indiana high school sports and you think basketball – with good reason – but there is a deep-rooted passion for all preps sports in this state and it's been a privilege to play a small role in sharing and experiencing those moments with the athletes, their families and fans."

IndyStar has kept high school sports coverage at its core even as the journalism industry has dramatically changed.

Newell now heads a high school sports department that includes three full-timers including Kyle Neddenriep, the paper's long-time lead high school writer who was recently promoted to High School Sports Editor, Brian Haenchen, girls high school sportswriter since 2021, and Josh Heron who joined IndyStar in 2024.

Only the Washington Post has won more national Associated Press Sports Editors (APSE) Awards than IndyStar since 2016.



Newell graduated from Suffolk University in Boston with a Broadcast Journalism degree.

He and his wife Holly make their home in Fishers and have two children, Zoey, a University of Wisconsin student, and Sadie, a Fishers High School student. Both daughters have been active student-athletes and Nat has served as a regular statistician for the Fishers girls lacrosse junior varsity and varsity teams.

This is the 39th year the IHSAA has recognized outstanding members of the Indiana news media from each of its three legislative districts for excellence in the coverage of high school sports. District 2 covers 28 counties across northern and central Indiana.

[Previous Award Winners](#)

About the Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc. (IHSAA)

The IHSAA is a voluntary, not-for-profit organization that is self-supporting without the use of tax monies. Since its founding in 1903, the Association's mission has been to provide wholesome, educational athletics for the secondary schools of Indiana. Its 412-member high schools - public, institutional, parochial and private - pay no annual membership fee or incur entry fees to play in the Association's tournaments. A state tournament series is conducted annually in 24 sports, 11 for girls, 11 for boys and two co-ed (unified flag football and track and field). A 19-person board of directors, elected by member school principals, governs the organization.