

# MEET THE GRAND MARSHALS



## Illinois High School Association

## 2022 State Finals

Here are the 2022 Grand Marshals who will lead the annual Grand March of Finalists Saturday night before the championship bouts of the 84th IHSAA Individual Wrestling State Final Tournament.

### BERNIE RUETTIGER

Bernie Ruettiger was born the 13th of 14 children to Dan and Betty Ruettiger. He began his wrestling career in seventh grade for IWCOA Hall of Fame coach Larry Stonitch at the Joliet Boys Club.

Bernie's wrestling continued as a student-athlete at Providence Catholic. His distinguished career saw him win the 1977 IHSAA Class A State Championship at 98 pounds, the first championship in Providence's rich athletic history. He also was a fourth-place medalist, earning him IWCOA two-time All-State status. Bernie was coached by his brother Tim, an IWCOA Hall of Fame coach.

His collegiate career continued at Eastern Illinois University, where he was a three-year starter for IWCOA Hall of Fame coaches Ron Clinton and Ralph McCausland.

His many outstanding accomplishments as a high school head coach began in 1986 and would include stops at Clifton Central, Bradley-Bourbonnais and Minooka.

Bernie developed a knack for first time state tournament accomplishments. At Clifton Central, he coached its first state finalist. At Bradley-Bourbonnais, he coached its first state champion. And at Minooka, he coached its first athletic team state championship.

At Clifton Central, from 1986 to 1989, Bernie coached four state qualifiers including State Runner-up Par Schoolman. At Bradley-Bourbonnais, from 1989 to 1999, he coached 12 state qualifiers including five state place-winners and State Champion Mike Russow.

His tenure at Minooka from 1999 to 2020 included 18 years as a head coach and three as an assistant coach. His teams had incredible success in the IHSAA Dual Meet State Finals, reaching the state finals eight times. Minooka captured the state championship in 2010 and finished as the runner-up in both 2009 and 2011.

At Minooka, Bernie coached three wrestlers to four IHSAA Individual State Championships; including two-time champ Russ Weil, Calvin Hill and Jake Residori. He also mentored 14 State Placewinners and 59 State Qualifiers and his career included 538 dual meet wins, 16 Conference Titles, 12 Regional Titles, and IWCOA Coach of the Year honors.

He is a member of three Hall of Fames, including Providence Catholic, the IWCOA and Rudy's Gym. Bernie is most proud of his 34 year-marriage and his eight children. He was able to coach many of his children.

### JOHNNY RUETTIGER

Johnny Ruettiger graduated from Providence Catholic in 1975 following a decorated wrestling career that saw him named the school's Athlete of the Year as a senior. He was a two-time wrestling captain and team MVP that won three conference titles to go along with a pair of Regional championships and one Sectional crown. He also reached the state semifinals and was a High School All-American who was selected to wrestle in the East/West All-State Dual Meet.

After graduating from Providence Catholic, he was a two-year starter and a team captain on the wrestling team at Joliet Junior College. He then moved to the University of Nebraska, where he was a two-year starter in the rugged Big 8 Conference, and then went on to serve as a Husker Graduate Assistant after completing his career on the mat.

His high school coaching career began at Lisle Senior High School, where he coached for 25 years and accumulated a career mark of 357 wins, 134 losses and one tie. During his time leading the Lions, he coached 65 All-Conference wrestlers, five Regional champions, and one Sectional champ. 75 of his wrestlers qualified for the IHSAA State Final meet, where 36 went on to place, including seven state champions. His 2006 squad earned a fourth place trophy at the IHSAA Dual Team State Meet.

One of his proudest accomplishments was winning the inaugural Ruettiger Cup in 1983. Johnny was the Suburban Coach of the Year in 2001 and IWCOA Coach of the Year in 2006. His amazing career as a wrestler and coach was immortalized in the IWCOA Hall of Fame in 2003.

Johnny has been married to his wife Nancy for 35 years. They have 2 children Katelyn and Johnny and two awesome grand kids Riley and Beckham.

### MARK RUETTIGER

Unofficially, Mark Ruettiger began his wrestling career earlier than most, as the youngest of Dan and Betty Ruettiger's 14 children, he had to learn how to defend himself at a very early age. Especially from his brother Johnny.



Bernie Ruettiger



Johnny Ruettiger



Mark Ruettiger



Mick Ruettiger



Tim Ruettiger

Officially, Mark began wrestling for the Joliet Boy's Club in 1974 and was coached by IKWF Co-founder and IWCOA Hall of Famer Larry Stonitsch. At the Boy's Club, he was a four-time state medalist, including a State Championship in 1977 at 95 pounds. Starting high school at Providence Catholic in 1978, he won his first Class A title at 98 pounds. He went on to win three more titles, becoming Illinois' first four-time State Champion. He was a member of Providence's first State Championship Team in 1978, along with a second-place finish in 1980, and a second State Championship Team in 1981. He was named Illinois Class A Outstanding Wrestler in 1980 and 1981 and was selected as a member of the USA Wrestling Dream Team in 1981 at 126 pounds.

Mark Continued his career at Eastern Illinois University, where he was a two-time NCAA Division I qualifier in 1984 and 1985. He won the Western Regional Championship in 1984, and in 1985 he finished second at the Western Regional and went on to become an All-American, placing 6th in the NCAA's.

Mark began his teaching career at Lincoln-Way High School in 1987. There he was a Physical Education Teacher and coached football, girls badminton, and wrestling. In his first four years at Lincoln-Way, he was an assistant wrestling coach, with his head coaching career starting in 1991. Throughout his 18 years as a head coach for both Lincoln-Way and Lincoln-Way Central, he had a 274-87-1 career record with 37 individual Regional Champs, 18 Sectional Champs, and 57 State Qualifiers. He coached 25 of his qualifiers to a state medal, with 12 of them reaching the finals and five winning State Championships. In 2008, his team won the Regional and Sectional title and went on to place 3rd in the Class AA Dual Team State Championships.

As the Lincoln-Way area grew and more schools were built, Mark retired as a head coach in 2009 and went on to become an assistant coach at Lincoln-Way West for the next 11 years. There he helped Head Coach Brian Glynn and Lincoln-Way West establish its wrestling program. In 2013, its fourth year as a program, West qualified for the Class 2A Dual Team State Finals, and in 2017, West went on to place third at the Class 3A Dual Team State Meet. Mark then retired from Lincoln-Way High School District 210 in 2020.

Throughout his life, Mark has had some unique opportunities in the world of sports. In 1985, he was working on the field when the Bears won the Super Bowl. In 1993, he was an extra in one of the top rated sports movies ever made, "Rudy", which is based on his oldest brother's life. In 1994, he was part of a team that hosted the Cadet World Championships at Lincoln-Way, and with great thanks to the late Jim Craig, he was honored with an invitation to be a volunteer and work the wrestling venue at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia.

His IWCOA honors include 1995 Hall of Fame induction, Class 2A Assistant Coach of the Year in 2010, and in 2017, he received the organization's Lifetime Service Award. He is a member of the Providence Catholic, Rudy's Gym, and the Joliet Area Sports Halls of Fame.

Mark and his wife, Mary Kay, of 32 years have four children: Matt, Josh, Kyle and Cassie.

### DOMINIC "MICK" RUETTIGER

One of seven brothers in the wrestling rich Ruettiger family, Mick Ruettiger began his career at Providence Catholic High School. He had a one-year high school career based on the timing when Providence

started its program. In 1973, he won a PSL conference championship, a 3rd place IHSAA Regional medal and finished with a 19-3-1 record.

In college, he wrestled for IWCOA Hall of Fame coaches in Henry Pillard at Joliet Junior College and Ron Clinton at Eastern Illinois University.

Mick's coaching career began in 1978-79 as a graduate assistant at EIU, he then became an assistant coach at Mt. St. Joseph Prep School from 1979 to 1981.

In the 1981-82 school year, he began his head coaching career at Plano High School. His team recorded an 11-8 record with one state qualifier.

He coached at St. Charles High School from 1982-1997. From 1993-97, St. Charles placed third twice, eighth once, sixth once and was first in 1997 in State Final individual scoring. St. Charles also finished third at the state dual meet in 1997.

Under Ruettiger, St. Charles produced 44 State Qualifiers, 21 place-winners, seven finalists and two state champions. St. Charles won back-to-back Upstate 8 and regional titles in 1996 and 1997, a sectional title in 1997 and won 176 dual meets.

Mick's next 20 years (1997-2017) were spent at the newly opened Nequua Valley High School. Nequua Valley's teams produced three top 16 state dual meet teams, six regional championships and eight Upstate 8 championships. In the state finals individual scoring, Nequua Valley placed in the top 10 seven years in a row, with its highest placing of fourth.

Individually under Ruettiger, Nequua Valley produced 54 state qualifiers, 29 place winners, eight finalists and two state champions.

Mick has been inducted into three Hall of Fames, including the IWCOA in 2002, and both St. Charles and Nequua Valley in 2020. He was also presented with the IWCOA Life Time Service Award in 2020.

He has continued his coaching as an assistant at St. Charles East.

Mick has been able to have a long career because of the patience and sacrifice of his wife, Bobbie and his daughters, Angela, Rebekah and Samantha. His success has been with the help of the coaches, athletes, managers, parents, and the administrators for which he is forever grateful.

### TIM RUETTIGER

The eldest sibling of this year's Grand Marshals, Tim Ruettiger was the forerunner and led the way for his brothers in the sport of wrestling. The seventh child of 14, he grew up in Joliet and was a 1971 graduate of Providence Catholic High School.

As a football player at Providence, he was named team MVP in 1969 and 1971, received All-Conference accolades and was awarded the Chicago Tribune Golden Helmet Award. Tim continued playing football at Joliet Junior College and then moved on to North Central College, where he lettered in both football and wrestling. He later went on to earn his Master's Degree from Eastern Illinois University.

After graduating, Tim returned to his Celtic roots in 1975 and became Providence's head wrestling coach in 1976. In 1988, he moved as head wrestling coach to Joliet West until 1990 and completed his coaching career at Leyden in 1994. During those 17 years, Tim finished with a record of 308-70-2, earned thirteen conference championships, won eight regional championships and hoisted five sectional championship plaques. Tim led Providence to dual team state championships in 1978, 1981 and 1988, runner-up finishes in 1980 and 1982, and third-place finishes in 1977 and 1987. Tim coached eight individual State champions and 25 individual State placers. Tim had the special honor to coach his two brothers, Bernie and Mark to state titles, including overseeing Mark's historic run to becoming the first four-time state champion in IHSAA history.

At Providence, Tim not only coached wrestling, but also assisted the Girl's Track Team - helping to lead yet another team to a state championship in 1978, a second-place finish in 1981 and a third-place trophy in 1980. Tim was also the head cross country coach where his team won the 1986 conference championship.

Tim was named the IWCOA Coach of the Year in 1981 and again in 1988. He was recognized by the National High School Athletic Coaches Association as its Coach of the Year in Region Four in 1989, and was inducted into the IWCOA Hall of Fame, the St. Mary Magdalene's Wall of Fame and the Providence Catholic Hall of Fame. Tim was also named Mason's Man of the Year in 1985.

Tim finished his career with 19 years in Administration as Dean of Students at West Leyden from 1994 to 2013. Tim has been married to his wife, Kelly, for 35 years and has three children, Daniel, Jacob and Maggie (Kyle) and is the proud Papa of his grandson, Timothy Michael Dooley.