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DRAKE'S BEN MCCOLLUM RECIPIENT OF 2025 JOE B. HALL AWARD

The top first-year head coach in division I college basketball

SAN ANTONIO, TX -- Drake's Ben McCollum is the recipient of the 2025 Joe B. Hall National Coach of the Year award, which is presented annually to the top first-time head coach in division I college basketball.

McCollum's division I debut was a record-setting season at Drake. He guided the Bulldogs to a school-record 31 wins, the Missouri Valley Conference regular season and tournament titles and a trip to the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

After sweeping the league's regular season and tournament titles, the Bulldogs earned a No. 11 seed in the NCAA Tournament. They defeated No. 6 seed Missouri, 67-57 to record the program's first non-First Four win since 1971. The team's 31 victories were the most by a first-year coach in Valley history, which earned him MVC Coach of the Year.

"Coach Ben McCollum is the definition of 'quality knowing no level,'" said James Wilhelmi, Senior Analyst of CollegeInsider.com. "The same championship mentality and elite execution that made him a powerhouse at the D2 level have seamlessly translated to the Missouri Valley. His immediate success at Drake is no surprise -- great coaching wins anywhere. The Joe B. Hall Award is a fitting recognition for his impact."

During his 16-year coaching career, McCollum won four NCAA Division II national championships (2017, 2019, 2021, 2022) at Northwest Missouri State University. He has amassed a 426-95 record and an 81.8 winning percentage. It is fifth-best all-time among collegiate men's basketball coaches.

McCollum is also the only non-division I coach to win the John McLendon award, which he was awarded in 2019.

The Joe B. Hall award is named in honor of longtime Kentucky head coach Joe B. Hall who was given the task of following the legendary Adolph Rupp at the school. In his first season, Hall finished 20-8, won the SEC and advanced to the NCAA Regional Finals.

Hall coached the Wildcats from 1972 to 1985. He won two-thirds of his games (297-100), received four SEC Coach of the Year honors, and won a National Championship in 1978. He also steered the program to two other Final Fours, won eight Southeastern Conference regular season championships and one Southeastern Conference tournament championship (1984).

Coach Hall passed away on January 15, 2022.

JOE B. HALL AWARD FINALISTS

Patrick Crarey II	Florida A&M
Mike DeGeorge	Cal Poly
Ethan Faulkner	Youngstown State
Kahil Fennell	UT Rio Grande Valley
Cornelius Jackson	Marshall
John Jakus	FAU
Jon Jaques	Cornell
Mike Jones	Old Dominion
Donny Lind	Mount St. Mary's
Jonathan Mattox	Morehead State
BEN MCCOLLUM	DRAKE
Gerry McNamara	Siena
Hank Plona	Western Kentucky
Clint Sargent	Wright State
Ivan Thomas	Hampton
Kevin Young	BYU

PREVIOUS AWARD WINNERS

Sundance Wicks, Green Bay (2024); Keith Urgo, Fordham (2023); Jordan Mincy, Jacksonville (2022); Mike Magpayo, UC Riverside (2021); Greg Paulus, Niagara (2020); Justin Hutson, Fresno State (2019); Ryan Ridder, Bethune-Cookman (2018); Ryan Odom, UMBC (2017); Eran Ganot, Hawaii (2016); Chris Jans, Bowling Green (2015); Brad Underwood, Stephen F. Austin (2014); Jack Perri, LIU Brooklyn (2013); Steve Prohm, Murray State (2012).

ABOUT COLLEGEINSIDER.COM

Established in 1996, CollegeInsider.com has been at the forefront of promoting college

basketball online. In the July 27, 1998, issue of ESPN the Magazine, College Insider was ranked No. 24 on the magazine's list of *99 Things to do Before you Die*. College Insider created the Mid-Major Top 25[®], the measuring stick for men's and women's programs outside of the proverbial power leagues, and has 18 national awards presented annually, including the Lute Olson Award, Lou Henson Award, and the John McLendon Award. The CollegeInsider.com All-Access series has been nominated for 5 Emmy Awards and won 2013 Emmy, for its' feature on New York City Basketball (Iona, LIU-Brooklyn and Manhattan). CI also created *This Game No Secret*, which debuted during the 2016 CIT and now has become an annual event, which has included programs like Duke, Houston, Miami, Ohio State, Ole Miss, Texas and Virginia.

