

# Dave Lewis named CAL Sports person of the Year

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Through the years we have had the pleasure of recognizing some special people as Cape-Atlantic League Sports person of the Year.

The spotlight has generally been turned on them for their success on the field or court. That group has included Pleasantville basketball coach Ken Leary, St. Joseph football coach Paul Sacco, Absegami wrestling coach Gene Barber, Ocean City basketball coach Dixie Howell, St. Augustine basketball coach Paul Rodio, Mainland football coach Bob Coffey, Middle Township basketball coach Tom Feraco, Wildwood girls basketball coach Dave Troiano, Sacred Heart basketball coach Jim Mogan, Ocean City football coach Gary Degenhardt and Bridgeton track coach Bob Cwik. They are all coaches whose programs have brought great pride to the CAL.

Administrators have been given the nod, people like Joe Clements, Paul LeFever, Nuncie Sacco and Harry Ackerman.

Sometimes it was for behind-the-scenes contributions – Boo Pergament and Father Ed Lyons,

creators of the Seagull Classic; Bob and Rick Traa, for their sponsorship of the McDonald's Game of the Week; Wildwood mayor Ernie Troiano, for his efforts creating and directing the Boardwalk Basketball Classic; and both Jason Kaye of FantaSea Flagship Resort and Dave Talarico of Schoppy's Inc. for the significant support they've given to CAL sports.

But there is no category that fits this year's choice.

Dave Lewis was a successful coach, making a significant contribution to Mainland's basketball program as an assistant and then guiding Oakcrest to some of its best years as its head coach until he succumbed to cancer last year.

But it was his demeanor, his optimism and his encouraging nature that really made the biggest impact on the coaches, athletes and fans of the Cape-Atlantic League.

He was honored by Coaches Against Cancer, receiving the news from Penn coach Fran Dunphy and St. Joseph's coach Phil Martelli, who visited an Oakcrest game personally.

His church on the mainland has announced plans for a trip to Africa in 2010 to assist in the build-

ing of an orphanage that will be named for him.

The most valuable player in the CAL boys all-star basketball game – The Dixie Howell Memorial Classic – will hereafter receive the Dave Lewis Memorial MVP Award.

The players at Oakcrest are wearing a patch in his memory on their jerseys and the school honored his family at a recent ceremony.

Wildwood and Wildwood Catholic have also been inspired. When they play their girl-boy doubleheader on Feb. 14 in the Wildwood High School gym, no admission will be charged. But the fans will be encouraged to make a donation to Coaches Against Cancer.

Dave Lewis just continues to make a difference.

His skills as a coach and teacher were an inspiration while he was alive and healthy. His dedication and positive attitude were inspiring as he fought the terrible disease that took his life. And the impression he left behind has motivated even more positive acts on his behalf.

Dave Lewis is our 2008 Cape-Atlantic League Sports Person of the Year.

## 2008's Top 10 local sports stories

With the calendar year over, it is always a good time to look back on the top CAL sports stories. In addition to the impact of Dave Lewis, here are the 10 sports stories that seemed to generate the most interest among Cape-Atlantic League fans in 2008:

1. The Mainland football team, led by a memorable year by quarterback Brent Caprio, completing a 12-0 season and winning the South Jersey Group IV championship.

2. Tara Booker and Sara Mostafa completing a run of four straight South Jersey girls basketball championships during their careers at Absegami.

3. Another state championship by the St. Augustine Prep swim team, which is developing into one of New Jersey's most consistent.

4. A state championship by the Absegami boys track team and a National ranking by its 4x400 meter relay team. And Ocean City's Brett Johnson winning in the Meet of Champions.

5. South Jersey basketball championships by the Atlantic City boys and Ocean City girls. (And a special nod to Wildwood, an original CAL school, for winning Dave Troiano's eighth South Jersey girls title).

6. The retirement of highly successful coaches Greg Goodwin of Absegami and Mike Pellegrino of Ocean City.

7. The dedicating of Ocean City High School's gymnasium in memory of former coach Dixie Howell and the impressive gathering of former players at the dedication.

8. Hammonton's 22-win season in boys basketball – the greatest in school history – and a share of the American Conference championship.

9. Another great fall by Ocean City teams, including unbeaten CAL seasons in boys soccer, girls soccer and field hockey.

10. The outstanding performances by two freshmen – St. Augustine's Isaiah Morton during the basketball season and Holy Spirit's Nigel Jones during the football season.

Let's hope 2009 will bring us as much to celebrate.