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# Bearcats Honored At Awards Banquet

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## Bearcats Honored At Awards Banquet

*By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor*

Athletes, coaches, parents, and school officials were all on hand Tuesday evening for the annual DHS Fall Sports Banquet, held in the DHS Cafeteria.

DHS Athletic Director Chuck Powers acted as the ‘master of ceremonies,’ and opened up the evening thanking everyone behind the scenes - the Press Box crew, the chain gang, Brett Dorton and his stats team, Dr. Bobby Jibben and Cory Blocker for treating injured Bearcats on the sidelines of Friday night football games, all the local churches that opened up for FCA breakfasts - that make Bearcat Athletics so successful.

The Lady Bearcat Tennis team was up first, and Coach Leanne Dooley expressed great pride in her team’s effort this season. The JV squad finished with an impressive 11-0 record.

“These JV girls really caught on quick, and they are mostly freshmen,” Dooley said. “In a few years, we will be awesome.”

The Varsity squad featured three seniors this season: Jessica Snider, Jamie Manuel, and Shanna Gant. They finished the season with a 9-7 record, and were the runners-up in the District Tournament for the second year in a row. “We’re going to get Kennett one of these years,” Dooley said, laughing. “This season has been a lot of fun for me, and these

seniors will be missed next year. I'd like to thank all the parents for their support, as well as all the boyfriends - one of the fun things with coaching the girls - for their support."

The tennis team gives three awards; Most Doubles Wins went to Manuel and Hailee Hubbard, Most Singles Wins went to Baylee Cooper, and team MVP went to Jessica Snider.

Up next was the Cross Country team, coached by Chris Bolin. The CC squad had 18 medalists during their regular season meets, with the boys coming in First Place at two meets and the Girls coming in Third Place at one meet. Zach Connor posted a career-best 18:35 in the 5K for the boys, while Katie Justice posted a 22:06 for the girls.

"This was a young team with a lot of new faces," Bolin said in a statement read by Powers. "I look forward to next year, and consider myself lucky to have such a great group of athletes."


Katie Justice took home the Best Female Runner award, while Alex Rybolt was named Best Male. Malinda Mayo was named the Team MVP.

Second year head coach Lauren Hutchcraft represented the Volleyball team, and gave high praise to her squad for a successful season.

"I'm honored to be up here as a graduate of DHS; I've always thought once you were a Bearcat, you were always a Bearcat," the 2003 DHS alum said. "I really enjoyed this season, and I want to commend the parents for all their support throughout the year."

The JV squad had a highly impressive one-loss season, including a first-place finish in the SCAA Tournament. The Varsity posted a 19-10-2 record, including second-place finished in both the SCAA and District Tournaments.

"I'm proud of their hard work and dedication to the program," Hutchcraft continued. "They were a fun, passionate group of girls."

The three volleyball awards went to  Erica Mouser (Most Valuable Defensive Player), Brittany Harris (Most Valuable Offensive Player), and Hannah Noe (Best Setter).

"It was a great year; very energetic kids," DHS Cheerleading Sponsor Vicki Windham

said. "I've never had as many compliments about the squad as I had this year. They're all underclassmen, so I look forward to the next few years with these girls. I'd also like to thank our fans for always being there to support both us and the football team"

Head football coach Aaron Pixley took the stage next, and commended all his teams on one of the most successful seasons in Bearcat Football history.

"The freshmen were a hard-working group of kids, we really like this group," Pixley said. "They struggled with injuries this year, but they've put up great numbers in the weight room so far. If they stick with it, they'll see a lot of success in the future."

"The JV did very well in the first half of the season, but they got hit by a lot of injuries as well," he continued. "We had to bring up some freshmen to fill in, but this group also has great numbers in the weight room, and that excites me."

"This is Dexter, we don't outrun people," Pixley said, laughing. "The teams we play on our schedule, they always have a lot more speed than we do. The weight room is a huge part of how we compensate for that."

The Varsity Football Team posted a 9-2 record during their record-breaking season. They won back-to-back District Championships for the first time in over 20 years, and won the SEMO Conference Title for the first time since 2005.

"We had an outstanding season," Pixley said. "They worked hard; nothing was given to them. This was one of the best seasons in DHS history, and I'm very, very proud of them."

"I had 18 seniors this year, the most I've ever had," he continued. "With this group, we believed we could win every game, and they put themselves in a position to win every game. They set a standard of excellence for these young guys to look up to in the coming seasons."

The football team gives four awards at the end of the season. Left Tackle Zach Lacy was named Most Valuable Lineman; Josh Overall was named Most Valuable Back; Alex Cliff was named Most Valuable Defensive Player, but there was an interesting twist for the Team MVP Award - it was given to the entire Bearcat Offense.

"These awards are all voted on by the team," Pixley said, "but this is the first time it's been given to an entire group of kids. They all deserve it; this was the best offensive line

I've ever coached. Cody Stevens ran for over 1,300 yards and 14 touchdowns and threw for over 1,500 yards and 20 touchdowns. Josh Overall ran for over 900 yards and 15 touchdowns, and Nick Summers ran for 600 yards and 7 touchdowns in eight games."

"Alex Cliff is the best blocking fullback I've ever had; our fullbacks usually don't run the ball, but when he did, he was extremely effective," Pixley continued. "Tyler Miller had over 800 yards receiving and 13 touchdowns; he averaged 19 yards per catch, which is excellent. Cody Neldon and Chase Young both have bright futures here, and Jake Lee was one of the better blocking tight ends I've had."

Brett Dorton was there to give an introduction to the evening's 'Main Event' - the presentation of the 2011 Charles Bland Award.

"The Bearcats rewrote our record books this year, but they also found their way into the MSHSAA record books," Dorton said. "They're 16th in total offense per game with 434.2 yards, 5th in first downs in a season with 230, tied for 12th for touchdowns in a single game with 10 against Kennett, and 21st in average points per game with 44.8."

"Tyler Miller's four interceptions against NMCC tied the state record, and the two he returned for touchdowns tied him for second-best," Dorton continued.

Dorton went on to thank several people, including: Charles Bland, avid supporter of DHS Athletics and whom the award and DHS Football stadium is named for; Alan Hedrick, founder of the Bland Award; Alan Gibson, sculptor of the original Bland Trophy; and Terry Hester, current sculptor of the award.

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Jason Comfort, Bland Committee

Member and '95 winner of the trophy, was then brought onstage to announce the winner of the 2011 Bland Award: Tyler Miller.

Miller joins a brotherhood of 18 individuals, including Kevin Young, Comfort, Kent Essner, Mike Guethle, Justin Kelley, David Howard, Jason Mayer, Nathan McKay, Drew Wethington, Marc Thrower (currently a member of the DHS coaching staff), Derek Clark, Andrew Stuever, Drew Pixley, Eric Windham, Nick Hessling, Gary Summers, and Taylor Jarrell.

The Bearcats had a great fall athletic season, and look forward to the upcoming Winter Sports season. Congratulations to all who won awards, and best of luck in the upcoming

season!

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