



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Youth 1st Team Award

2022 Minnesota Youth Girls Grade State Championships

(Owatonna, MN) (March 2, 2022) – Minnesota Youth Athletic Services (MYAS) in strategic partnership with Youth 1st and supported by Federated Insurance, Pearson, Cashwise, Bennerotte & Associates, Metronet, The Retrofit Companies, Profinium, Buffalo Wild Wings, Pizza Ranch, Heartland Chevy Dealers, Dick’s Sporting Goods, U.S. Council for Athlete’s Health, and Urban Air Adventure Parks have selected **541 Girls Youth Basketball teams from across the state of MN** as recipients of a Youth 1st Team Award for their outstanding sportsmanship and positive conduct during the 2022 MYAS Grade State Championships, held February 26-27, in multiple locations across the Twin Cities metro area.

As the premier youth basketball event in the state of Minnesota, the Grade State Championships is about showcasing the kids and competition, not the negativity of unsportsmanlike behavior of players, coaches, and spectators that tends to creep into youth events. For the third consecutive year, MYAS and Youth 1st are excited to recognize the teams and associations that received exemplary scores from the officials for their sportsmanship and positive conduct during the tournament.

The Youth 1st Team Award recognizes positive conduct and good sportsmanship from players, coaches and everyone associated with the team (parents, fans and spectators). “We are placing the emphasis on how you play the game, which is ultimately more important than if you win or lose.” said Mark Arjes, Founder/Director of Youth 1st. “It has become increasingly difficult to find and retain coaches and officials for youth sports because of the abuse that they take during games. We believe it is time to model and encourage values-based actions, creating what we call a Conduct 1st environment where the focus is on the kids, competitive energies are kept in check and officials and opponents are respected.”

“One of the goals within the MYAS mission is to promote sportsmanship, teamwork and cultural interaction through sporting competition.” said Dawson Blank, MYAS Executive Director. “The entire MYAS team is thrilled to continue our partnership with Youth 1st to help us meet those goals within our programs. As a leader in youth sports throughout the great state of Minnesota, we want to be proactive and impact participants (youth athletes, coaches, parents, and officials) in a positive way through a Conduct 1st environment at all our tournaments and events. Implementing this initiative with Youth 1st during the Grade State Championships has significantly decreased the number of unsportsmanlike events that took place compared to previous years.”

About the MYAS: The Minnesota Youth Athletic Services, Inc. (www.myas.org) was organized in 1991 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the delivery of youth sports services to young athletes, coaches, and parents. The MYAS is Minnesota's largest multi-sport organization focused solely on youth athletics with more than 150,000 kids participating in our programs each year. The MYAS is a central clearinghouse for youth sports, serving as an information channel linking hundreds of youth associations, coaches, and thousands of parents.

The educational division of MYAS, Trusted Coaches, is a nationwide platform training coaches to maximize the probability that positive things will happen to young athletes. This is accomplished by: 1) Screening coaches through a nationally accredited nationwide criminal background check; 2) giving coaches the tools to be effective; and 3) creating an online National Coaches’ Registry that parents and associations can access. Additionally, Trusted Coaches has created a cutting-edge education program to foster compliance with the new **Safe Sport Authorization Act**. Information about this program can be found at trustedcoaches.org or @MYASMinnesota and @trustedcoaches on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

MYAS - Youth Sports Done Right by putting Youth 1st
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About Youth 1st: (www.youth1st.com) @Youth1stMN on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter

The Youth 1st Team Award was created by working with officials and tournament directors. The officials provide a team selection vote after each game during the tournament based on the conduct and sportsmanship exhibited by coaches, players and fans. Teams with exemplary scores from their officials are recognized with Youth 1st Team Awards. The mission of Youth 1st is to connect Conduct, Character and Community to youth activity programs. Youth 1st is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization headquartered in Owatonna, MN. Youth 1st is an official Playball! MN Partner of the MN Twins.

Youth 1st - Connecting **Conduct, Character** and **Community** through Values-Based Youth Development.

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