



WYOMING HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION  
6571 EAST 2<sup>ND</sup> STREET  
CASPER, WY 82609  
(307) 577-0614 (Phone) / (307) 577-0637 (FAX)  
[www.whsaa.org](http://www.whsaa.org)



Ron Laird, Commissioner of the Wyoming High School Activities Association since 2004, has announced his intention to retire effective June 30, 2023. Laird will be completing a 45-year career in education.

Prior to joining the WHSAA staff, Laird served on the WHSAA Board of Directors from 1997-2004 and was elected President for the 2001-02 school year. Laird had a distinguished career in Powell for 26 years as a teacher, coach, and administrator. During his 20 years as the boys' head basketball coach, the Panthers won two State Championships, three State Runner-ups and several Conference and Regional Championships. Laird was inducted into the Wyoming Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2000.

Laird took pride in being a servant leader. His goal was to assist schools by having the WHSAA provide leadership to the member schools in advancing their programs. "I was very fortunate to have a dedicated staff that shared the common goal of service," Laird said. "The most enjoyable benefit of this job was the relationships that were developed with such quality and dedicated coaches, sponsors, officials and administrators across this great state." The WIAAA awarded Laird the "Nancy Nakahara Distinguished Service Award" in 2001, 2004 and 2009 for his service to the state Athletic Directors.

During his tenure, safety and risk minimization were at the forefront. The WHSAA was one of the first states to initiate a rule that would not allow an unconscious athlete to return to play on the same day. The WHSAA was also one of the first states to offer concussion insurance to all participating athletes.

A special program initiated by Laird was the WHSAA Student Advisory Council in 2008 to promote sportsmanship. The student led council initiated the "Join the RIDE" slogan. Each year the council facilitates a statewide sportsmanship summit with student leaders from around the state to take back ideas to improve sportsmanship at their school.

Laird was able to secure matching funds to build a new office for the WHSAA that has been utilized by many of the activities, coaches, and activity director groups. He has increased sponsorships over the years, which has allowed the WHSAA to not have to raise school dues or ticket prices for culminating events.

In addition, Indoor Track, Girls Softball and Girls Wrestling were all added during his tenure to provide more opportunities for the Wyoming students. Moving the State Football Championships

to the University of Wyoming and giving the athletes the opportunity to play at the “War” has been a great experience for those students.

At the National level, Laird was very active and well respected. He served a four-year term on the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Board of Directors, ending his term by serving as the board’s President. He also served on the HoldCo. Board of Directors, which is associated with the NFHS Network. Laird was the Chairman of the High School Basketball rules committee for five years. He previously served on several NFHS committees, including the Strategic Planning, Sports Medicine, Annual Summer Meeting Advisory, Football Rules, Citizenship/Equity, and the Athletic Director Conference committee for two terms.

Laird took a major role in leading the WHSAA through the COVID pandemic to allow the sports and activities to continue participating, including having culminating events, during this difficult time. “Although it was one of the most difficult challenges I had in my career, I was proud of how we worked together to provide opportunities for our students,” Laird said. “It showed how, when we work together, positive outcomes can be accomplished. The results would have never happened without the cooperation of the member schools, our board of directors, parents, the health department and most importantly, our students.”

“I have been Blessed to have outstanding mentors throughout my career, as well as a loyal staff, both in Powell and the 19 years at the WHSAA. I am one of the lucky ones that has got to enjoy and look forward to going to work every day. Attempting to be a good role model and demonstrating a strong work ethic was a goal throughout my career. The part I will miss the most is the people. I have been so fortunate that this position has provided me the opportunity to establish long-lasting relationships and friendships with so many quality individuals across the state and Nation.”

“Lastly, a special thanks to my family for their support throughout my career. Thank you to the very supportive WHSAA board of directors, past and present. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve this outstanding organization!”