

Empire 8 named All-American Sportsmanship Conference for National Sportsmanship Day

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ROCHESTER, NY - The Empire 8 has been announced as an All-American Sportsmanship Conference for National Sportsmanship Day (NSD) by the Institute for International Sport (IIS). This is the first time a conference has ever received such an honor from IIS. The conference will join NCAA Division I programs Indiana University and Bucknell College, junior colleges Joliet and Miami Dade, and several high schools as team honorees on National Sportsmanship Day set for March 4, 2008. The All-American Sportsmanship School Award honors schools, and in this case the entire Empire 8 conference, that have exceptional sportsmanship programs and effective sportsmanship initiatives. "Under the great leadership of Commissioner Chuck Mitrano and nine outstanding athletic directors and presidents, the Empire 8 is a model of good sportsmanship," said Dan Doyle, Executive Director for IIS and Founder of National Sportsmanship Day. "The Institute for International Sport is very pleased to recognize the extraordinary example set by this great conference." "This is an incredible honor and reflective of the values and leadership of our member institutions and our fine student-athletes," said Mitrano, who was named a Sports Ethics Fellow by the Institute for International Sport in 2004. "We are very proud of this recognition." National Sportsmanship Day, an annual event started in 1991, is celebrated on the first Tuesday of each March and administered by the Institute for International Sport. National Sportsmanship Day entered a partnership with USA Today 15 years ago. The newspaper sponsors a national essay contest which nearly 10,000 young people have entered. Since its inception, the goal of National Sportsmanship Day has been to provoke thoughtful discussion and activities on the issue. An important component of the event is to help athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators use sports to promote self-control and non-violence. Since 2001, the Empire 8 has created and implemented innovative and groundbreaking sportsmanship programming and policies. Many of the conference's initiatives have received great publicity, including features in USA Today, The Chronicle of Higher Education, The NCAA News, and various athletic profession publications. The Empire 8 has been a national leader in sportsmanship education and programming for many years. Empire 8 developed a game management policy which was selected as a model best practice for the Division III and created an Ejection Policy which requires ejected student-athletes or coaches to sit out an additional contest when ejected. This is a policy that has been adopted by other conferences as well. Empire 8 also developed a very broad-based educational program and standards for fan behavior within its membership. Mitrano serves on the NCAA's association-wide Committee on Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct (CSEC), whose purpose is to establish policies and educational programs for sportsmanship and ethical conduct in intercollegiate athletics consistent with the educational mission and goals of the member institutions in all divisions. He founded the Division III Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct Committee focusing on issues facing the members of the NCAA's largest division and he also created the nationally renowned Conduct Foul Program which is the only known tangible way to monitor unsporting behavior. The conference was the first to implement the program which was eventually adopted by Division III for use amongst its membership. Several Division I and II institutions and high schools use the program. Empire 8 consists of Alfred University (NY); Elmira College (NY); Hartwick College (NY); Ithaca College (NY); Nazareth College (NY); Rochester Institute of Technology (NY); St. John Fisher College (NY); Stevens Institute of Technology (NJ) and Utica College (NY). Alfred University President Charles Edmondson serves as conference president.