

Contact: Matt Friedman / 248-762-1430 / mfriedman@tannerfriedman.com

MICHIGAN SPORTS HALL OF FAME ANNOUNCES INDUCTION CLASS OF 2026

The Michigan Sports Hall of Fame announces its Induction Class of 2026, celebrating and recognizing the best of Michigan sports.

Members of this class are scheduled to be honored during the 2026 Induction Event, on Thursday December 17, 2026 at the Sound Board Theater at MotorCity Casino Hotel in Detroit. For tickets, which start at \$25, visit mshof.org.

The Class was voted on by the Hall of Fame's Election Task Force, a Statewide Election Committee, and the public. The Election Task Force, comprised of current and former journalists, sports executives, and other diverse and knowledgeable members of the community, was chaired by Risa Balayem of PR1, Inc., a longtime sports and entertainment communications professional. The Class was ratified, unanimously, by the Hall of Fame's Board of Directors, which also selected the winners of this year's awards.

"This class is filled with champions from varied levels and eras. Their induction helps make sure that fans of Michigan won't forget what they accomplished. Congratulations to the Class of 2026," said Scott Leshner, Hall of Fame chairman.

"We appreciate the increased number of Michigan sports fans who helped select this class," added Jordan Field, Hall of Fame president. "Public voters supported those they remember the most, helping to make sure each of our inductees is among the most worthy."

The Induction Class of 2026:

Professional:

Swin Cash

- Drafted second overall by the Detroit Shock in the WNBA Draft, Cash's presence led to the resurgence of the Shock on the court. She helped lead the team to the 2003 WNBA Championship. That season, she averaged nearly 17 points per game, a pace that continued through the following season. She spent her first six professional seasons with the Shock on her way to a 15-year WNBA career. She was inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in 2020.

Kevin Glover

- The anchor of the Detroit Lions offensive line from 1985 to 1997, Glover was a three-time Pro Bowl center. He is best known for being a key blocker for Michigan Sports and Pro Football Hall of Famer Barry Sanders during his historic 1997 season, where he rushed for 2053 yards. He was also the middle of the Lions' record-setting 1991 offense.

Amateur:

Mark Ingram II

- A four-year starter in football at Grand Blanc High School and then Flint Southwestern for his senior year, Ingram was the Saginaw Valley Player of the Year and All-State as a senior, playing both running back and cornerback. As a track star, he was a nine-time All-State selection as a sprinter and long jumper. He went on to win the Heisman Trophy at the University of Alabama and a Pro Bowl NFL career for four teams.

Peter Vanderkaay

- After growing up in Oakland Township and graduating from Rochester Adams High School, where he won three state swimming championships, Venderkaay starred at the University of Michigan, winning five NCAA titles and 14 Big Ten Championships. As an Olympic swimmer, he won four medals, including Gold in 2004 and 2008 and Bronze in 2008 and 2012.

Coach:

Tony Annese

- A native of Corunna, an Alma College alum and football coach at six Michigan high schools, Annese is best known for his winning programs at the college level. In three seasons at Grand Rapids Community College, his teams only lost three games, including a perfect season in 2011. He coached 14 All-Americans at GRCC, before moving on to Ferris State. In Big Rapids, his Bulldogs have won four Division II National Championships and seven conference championships, heading into the 2026 season.

Media:

Paul Woods

- A former Detroit Red Wings forward and team captain, Woods stepped off the ice and into the radio booth in 1987 and became the longest-working analyst in the history of Detroit sports broadcasting, with a 40-year career that ended with his retirement in 2026. He called more than 3,000 games, including Stanley Cup titles in 1997, 1998, 2002 and 2008.

Contributor:

Bill Lajoie

- A Wyandotte native and Western Michigan University alum, Lajoie joined the Detroit Tigers as a scout in 1969 after his baseball playing career. As General Manager of the Tigers from 1984 to 1990, he is credited for putting the final pieces together that cemented the Tigers as World Series Champions in 1984 and American League East title winners in 1987. He later was part of World Series titles in the front offices of the Atlanta Braves and Boston Red Sox. Lajoie passed away in 2010.

In addition, the Hall will recognize two award winners at its December event, along with the 2026 inductees:

Michigan Treasure Award (a special honor to recognize individuals or teams whose unique contributions have added greatly to the history of sports in the State of Michigan):

Mark Fidrych

- 50 years ago this summer, in 1976, “The Bird” took baseball fans across the country on a magical ride of personality and pitching brilliance that should never be forgotten.

Courage Award (a special honor to recognize individuals who serve as role models to all sports fans, athletes, coaches and mentors):

Doug Drenth

- Drenth, the boys’ golf coach at Charlevoix High School, led his team during a year of extraordinary success and hardship, from saving lives avoiding a fatal crash and sustaining serious injuries during what could have been a fatal crash of the team’s van to ultimately winning a State Championship, the Hall will honor this amazing real life Michigan story.

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, particularly when it comes to inclusion, the Hall’s Board undertook a careful review of all nomination and election processes, to ensure as many worthy candidates have a chance at induction as possible in the future. This is the first year the Board ratified a class under these new guidelines.

The Hall of Fame also invites fans to dress like a Hall of Famer. Michigan Sports Hall of Fame apparel is now available via mshof.org, click “Shop.” All proceeds support the Hall’s mission of preserving the history of Michigan sports.

The Michigan Sports Hall of Fame is a volunteer-led 501c3 non-profit organization. For more information visit mshof.org, follow @MichiganSportsHOF on Facebook, @MSHOF on X/Twitter, and @michigansports_HOF on Instagram.

#