



PRESS RELEASE

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Florida Region of USA Volleyball Announces Class of 2021 Regional Award Winners

The Florida Region of USA Volleyball announces the winners for their 20th annual awards program.

Eustis, FL – March 29, 2021 – The Florida Region of USA Volleyball is proud to recognize several outstanding members for their hard work and commitment to further the sport of volleyball. Many thankless hours go into coaching a team, running a club, attending clinics, getting certified, planning events and improving the region every year. In the past, the Florida Region has presented the awards listed below at their annual Awards Ceremony, however as everyone practices social distancing, it is important that these individuals are recognized for their achievements. This year the Florida Region of USA Volleyball is awarding sixteen (16) awards to members across the state of Florida.

Below is a list of the 2021 Award Recipients:

- **Ben Jordan Golden Whistle Award (Outstanding Adult Referee)** – Ricky Cruz (Minneola, FL)
- **Outstanding Junior Officiating Team Award** – Legacy 14 John, Legacy VB Club (Tampa, FL)
- **Most Improved Juniors Club Award** – Quest Volleyball (Brandon, FL)
- **Outstanding Male Coach Award** – Corey Marks (Plantation, FL)
- **Outstanding Female Coach Award** – Pri Piantadosi-Lima (Tampa, FL)
- **Outstanding Club Director Award** – Jules Colina & Pri Piantadosi-Lima, Optimum Beach VBC (Tampa, FL)
- **Outstanding Service Award** – Sam Crosby (Haines City, FL)
- **Outstanding Service Award** – Lake-Sumter State College Women's Volleyball (Leesburg, FL)
- **Norelli Family Extra Mile Award** – Rodrigo Justiniano (Miami, FL)
- **Norelli Family Extra Mile Award** – Carlos Rionda (Miami, FL)
- **Ernest Langford Pioneer Award** – Latoya Washington (Tallahassee, FL)
- **Meritorious Service Award** – Darin Clark (Rockledge, FL)
- **Bruce Perry Volleyball Ambassador Award** – Pedro Garcia (Orlando, FL)
- **Florida Region Hall of Fame Inductee** – Bill Littell (Ocala, FL)
- **Florida Region Hall of Fame Inductee** – Dave Greenlee (Jupiter, FL)

The Executive Director & President of the Florida Region, **Steve Bishop**, commented, "This is an exceptional class of award winners. They represent the best of the best and the Florida Region is honored to recognize each one of them for their outstanding contributions to our sport. Our volleyball family is made up of many parts (athletes, parents, coaches, club directors, event directors, trainers, officials, & leaders) and each one of them contributes to the overall success throughout the Region. All contributors are important to the Region, and many contribute without any expectation of recognition. Each year we search far and wide for distinguished excellence so that we can recognize the great things that are happening in our family. It is my honor and privilege this year to announce the 2021 Florida Region award winners. Please join me in congratulating each of them for their many contributions."

The Florida Region of USA Volleyball will be dedicating a day to each of the 2021 award recipients beginning on June 1, 2021. Those who are interested will be able to find the dedicated posts on the Florida Region social media platforms (@floridaregion) as well as on the home page of the Florida Region website (www.floridavolleyball.org).

Each recipient will be honored with their own day in June. Below is a schedule for 2021.

- June 1st – **Ricky Cruz** (Ben Jordan Golden Whistle Award)
- June 2nd – **Legacy 14 John, Legacy Volleyball Club** (Outstanding Junior Officiating Team Award)
- June 3rd – **Quest Volleyball** (Most Improved Juniors Club Award)
- June 4th – **Corey Marks** (Outstanding Male Coach Award)
- June 7th – **Pri Piantodosi-Lima** (Outstanding Female Coach Award)
- June 8th – **Jules Colina & Pri Piantodosi-Lima**, Optimum Beach VBC (Outstanding Club Directors)
- June 9th – **Sam Crosby** (Outstanding Service Award)
- June 10th – **Lake-Sumter State College Women's Volleyball Team** (Outstanding Service Award)
- June 11th – **Rodrigo Justiniano & Carlos Rionda** (Norelli Family Extra Mile Award)
- June 14th – **Latoya Washington** (Ernest Langford Pioneer Award)
- June 15th – **Darin Clark** (Meritorious Service Award)
- June 16th – **Pedro Garcia** (Bruce Perry Volleyball Ambassador Award)
- June 17th – **Bill Littell**, Inducted Posthumously (Region Hall of Fame Inductee)
- June 18th – **Dave Greenlee**, Inducted Posthumously (Florida Region Hall of Fame Inductee)

About Florida Region Awards Ceremony:

The Florida Region Awards Ceremony was started in 2002 and has recognized over 500 individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the sport and to the Region. It was started by **Steve Bishop**, the Assistant Commissioner and Treasurer at the time, and has run continuously for 20 years in conjunction with the Florida Region's marquee indoor girls' championship event. Additional information on the event and past award winners is available here: www.floridavolleyball.org/regional-awards-ceremony.

About Florida Region of USA Volleyball:

The Florida Region of USA Volleyball is a 501c3 non-profit that began operations in the 1960's and was officially incorporated in 1982 to promote the sport of volleyball and to create competitive playing opportunities for volleyball enthusiasts of all ages throughout the State of Florida. The Florida Region is one of the 40 regional volleyball associations under the umbrella of USA Volleyball and currently serves over 14,500 members. Indoor, outdoor and para volleyball programming is available for adults, juniors, coaches and officials. The Florida Region of USA Volleyball is headquartered in Eustis, FL and manages the 21-court Hickory Point Beach Sand Volleyball Complex in Tavares, FL. Additional information on the Florida Region can be found at: www.FloridaVolleyball.org.

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2021 AWARD CITATIONS:

Ricky Cruz – Ben Jordan Golden Whistle Award (Outstanding Adult Official):

The Ben Jordan Golden Whistle Award is named in honor of the late Ben Jordan, a Florida resident and well-known legend in the official's world that made a significant impact on the sport at the regional, national and international level. This award is presented to a Florida Region adult official who has been recognized by their peers as an outstanding official. This person displays a high level of professionalism on and off the court, has extensive knowledge of the game and rules, and is of utmost moral character. Ricky was identified by his peers and the Florida Region Official's Chair for exhibiting these characteristics and qualities this year. His proficiency and professionalism garnered him this recognition and we honor Ricky Cruz with the 2021 Ben Jordan Golden Whistle Award.

Legacy 14 John, Legacy Volleyball Club – Outstanding Junior Officiating Team Award:

This award is presented to a team that excels in officiating or has gone above and beyond in their officiating duties when representing the Florida Region at a USA Volleyball sanctioned event. In January 2021, Legacy 14 John volunteered to cover a referee assignment at a national bid tournament for another team that left the event early. When asked if they could help, they did not hesitate and "crushed" the referee assignment. This decision demonstrated the team's commitment to excellence and allowed the event to continue without delay. When asked to take on an extra, unscheduled referee assignment, Legacy 14 John rose to the occasion and represented the Florida Region with distinction. For this reason, the Florida Region is presenting Legacy 14 John, of Legacy Volleyball Club with the 2021 Outstanding Junior Officiating Team Award.

Quest Volleyball Club – Most Improved Juniors Club Award:

The Florida Region of USA Volleyball has selected Quest Volleyball Club as the 2021 Most Improved Juniors Club due to their great work in the sport as a new club in the Region. They have demonstrated excellent administrative skills as a young club and they are making moves into the top echelons of the regional rankings. A Quest Volleyball parent said, "Quest has expanded its club and coaching staff over the last year. There is more opportunity for players to practice as well. They offer a competitive program and often place in tournaments. They have a great coaching staff and are involved in the community. The coaches make players a priority and develop them appropriately." The Florida Region is proud to recognize Quest Volleyball Club as the recipient of the 2021 Most Improved Juniors Club.

Corey Marks – Outstanding Male Coach Award:

The Florida Region Outstanding Male Coach Award is presented to someone who displays leadership, integrity and overall dedication to the growth of their athletes and the sport. Corey Marks currently coaches for the club he founded, MVP Academy, and was selected as a coach for the 2021 Team Florida Indoor HP All-Star program, a program that he knows well after representing it previously as an athlete. One parent commented, "Corey has been instrumental in bringing back the passion my son had for volleyball back when he first started playing. He is smart and strategic while being caring and compassionate. My husband and I are impressed with his professionalism. His love for the game and truly wanting to bring out the best in the athlete are apparent on and off the court." The Florida Region honors coaches like Corey that give back to the sport through coaching and mentoring youth athletes. For his dedication and commitment, the Florida Region honors Corey Marks with the 2021 Outstanding Male Coach Award.

2021 AWARD CITATIONS (continued):

Pri Piantadosi-Lima – Outstanding Female Coach Award:

The Florida Region Outstanding Female Coach Award is presented to someone who displays leadership, integrity and overall dedication to the growth of their athletes and the sport. Pri Piantadosi-Lima represents all of these qualities with determination and distinction. One parent commented, “Pri managed to keep her club running through a pandemic while not increasing rates and following CDC guidelines. She currently has girls playing in 9 of the AVCA top 20 schools. She added three new components to her business (tournaments, showcases, satellite locations and an online mental health training program) and helped more than ten girls sign with their dream schools and earn scholarships. Most importantly, she created an atmosphere in which her athletes feel okay to try and fail when learning something new; that’s why they all come back and train with Optimum on breaks after they graduate.” For her outstanding efforts, the Florida Region is proud to recognize Priscilla Piantadosi-Lima with the 2021 Outstanding Female Coach Award.

Jules Colina & Pri Piantadosi-Lima, Optimum Beach VBC – Outstanding Club Director(s) Award:

The Florida Region Outstanding Club Director Award is presented to a club director who has been nominated by their athletes, colleagues or other club members. Additionally, they are leaders who display leadership, integrity and an overall dedication to the growth of their club, their athletes and the sport. Jules & Pri are committed to teaching and applying a unique and impactful training methodology to players of all levels and ages. A parent from Optimum Beach Volleyball commented, “Jules is an outstanding professional, managing tournaments, multiple venues, and then venue changes during COVID, and coaching at a high level. Jules is always willing and available to support all parents and athletes at a moment’s notice to ensure they receive the best training possible while also enjoying a wonderful learning experience.” Another parent commented, “Pri is an amazing coach & club director and has the unique ability to teach all ages and all levels and achieve notable results!” The Florida Region recognizes these two strong leaders in our sport this year with the Outstanding Club Director Award. Congratulations to Priscilla Piantadosi-Lima and Jules Colina!

Sam Crosby – Outstanding Service Award:

The Outstanding Service Award is presented to an individual or organization who has provided an act (or acts) of service which greatly benefit the Region, their members and the overall goal of growing the sport. Sam regularly volunteers at Florida Region hosted beach events. She volunteers on staff to give back to the sport, earn her volunteer hours and learn more about event operations. Sam is always the first one to sign up for a volunteer assignment when they are advertised. Her kind spirit and contagious smile makes her one of the staff’s favorite volunteers. For her dedication and service at such a young age, The Florida Region of USA Volleyball has selected Sam Crosby as the recipient of the 2021 Outstanding Service Award.

Lake-Sumter State College Women’s Volleyball Team – Outstanding Service Award:

The Outstanding Service Award is presented to an individual or organization who has provided an act (or acts) of service which greatly benefit the Region, their members and the overall goal of growing the sport. LSSC Women’s Volleyball Team has consistently volunteered to support Florida Region beach events at Hickory Point Beach. Recently they arrived in full force to support the 2020 FL Pro Best of the Beach event during the pandemic. Their volunteer service contributed to the event winning a national

2021 AWARD CITATIONS (continued):

award from SportsEvents Magazine. The Florida Region is honored to present the Lake-Sumter State College Women's Volleyball Team with the 2021 Outstanding Service Award.

Rodrigo Justiniano & Carlos Rionda – Norelli Family Extra Mile Award:

The Norelli Family Extra Mile Award is named in honor of the Norelli Family Foundation, a significant contributor to the Florida Region Scholarship Program. This award is presented to an individual or organization that has gone the extra mile to benefit the Region, their members and the overall goal of growing the sport. Both Rodrigo and Carlos have contributed of their time, business expertise and finances to help grow the sport in the Miami area. Their support and contributions have positively impacted volleyball, and they are both continually seeking additional ways to bring attention to the area and its growth opportunities. In 2020, the duo also financially supported the inaugural FL Pro Best of the Beach event, on behalf of Miami VB Academy, which helped the beach event achieve national level success. For their selfless contributions to the sport, the Florida Region individually recognizes Rodrigo Justiniano & Carlos Rionda as the recipients of the 2021 Norelli Family Extra Mile Award.

Darin Clark – Meritorious Service Award:

The Meritorious Service Award is presented to an individual or organization that has continuously displayed noteworthy and impactful acts of service to the Region and its members over an extended period of time. This year's recipient is Darin Clark, the Official's Chair for the Florida Region. Darin has been a member of the Florida Region for 30 years and has served in a leadership role for 16 of those years. During his many years of service as the Official's Chair, Darin has consistently represented the officials with distinction and lobbied on their behalf to improve relations and the officiating experience. He oversees the official's training & evaluation plan and has continued the longstanding tradition of excellence with officials being advanced annually at the regional and national level. Darin brings a wealth of talent and experience to the boardroom and the Region. The Florida Region is honored to present Darin Clark with the 2021 Meritorious Service Award.

Pedro Garcia– Bruce Perry Volleyball Ambassador Award:

The Bruce Perry Volleyball Ambassador Award is named after the late Bruce Perry, a long-time member of the Florida Region and Palm Beach Juniors. Bruce was known for his friendly nature and strong work ethic. He contributed for many years at the club level, along with working region events, and always made a positive impact on those around him. Bruce embodied the true definition of an ambassador for our sport. This year, Pedro Garcia will be added to the distinguished list of Bruce Perry Volleyball Ambassadors. Pedro has a long and notable history with our sport, and he is well known for his calm demeanor and consistently positive approach to officiating the game. He is always available when called upon and his "ambassador spirit" makes those around him better. For these reasons, the Florida Region proudly recognizes Pedro Garcia as the 2021 Bruce Perry Volleyball Ambassador award winner.

Latoya Washington – Ernest Langford Pioneer Award

The Ernest Langford Pioneer Award is named after a true pioneer from the Tallahassee area, Ernest Lanford. Ernest was impactful in the early days of the sport by forming leagues and events to grow the

2021 AWARD CITATIONS (continued):

game and introduce volleyball in North Florida. This award is given to someone who has embarked on a new initiative or program that has contributed to the growth of the sport. This year's recipient, Latoya Washington, has served the members of the Florida Region as a club director in the Tallahassee area since 2007. Recently Latoya agreed to take on a new role as the Chair of the newly formed Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group to the Florida Region Board of Directors. This twelve-member group consists of minority coaches, club directors and officials from across the Region. Latoya was elected to chair the advisory group and help identify areas where volleyball opportunities can be expanded into minority and underserved communities. Her dedication to her community along with her leadership and her desire to leave the sport in a better place is why Latoya Washington is being recognized with the 2021 Ernest Langford Pioneer Award.

Florida Region Hall of Fame Inductees, Class of 2021:

The Florida Region Hall of Fame Award is the highest honor presented by the Florida Region. It is reserved for those individuals that have significantly contributed to the sport of volleyball in the Florida Region for an extended period of time. Their noteworthy contributions have continually and positively impacted the sport in their local community and across the Region.

- **Bill Littell, Class of 2021 Inductee, (Inducted Posthumously)**

Bill Littell is being recognized and inducted posthumously for his contributions to the Florida Region as a region leader, club leader and coach. Bill began his journey in the Florida Region in the late 1990s and served on the board of directors as the Junior Girl's Coordinator. In 2000, Bill was hired as the first Regional Tournament Director for the Florida Region, the first position of its kind in Florida. He was instrumental in transitioning the Region from small events held in 2-court & 4-court gymnasiums to the convention center style events that we know today. Bill worked with the Region for several years and then transitioned to a club leader and coach role for the remainder of his time in the Florida Region. Between 2005-2018, Bill worked with Gainesville Juniors, Ocala Power Volleyball Academy and then ended his tenure in Florida as the club director for Ocala Power United, a merger between Ocala Power and Marion County Juniors. He was a strong advocate for clubs and carried a strong voice with the Florida Region. Unfortunately, we lost Bill to an auto accident in 2019. He made significant contributions to the sport of volleyball and to the Florida Region. For these reasons, the Florida Region is proud to induct Bill Littell into the Florida Region Hall of Fame, Class of 2021.

- **Dave Greenlee, Class of 2021 Inductee, (Inducted Posthumously)**

Dave Greenlee is being recognized and inducted posthumously for his contributions to the Florida Region as an official. Dave was a Florida Region member for over 20 years and served as a member of the Regional Official's Training & Evaluation team in District 4 for many of those years. He was responsible for recruiting and training hundreds of officials during his tenure along with representing the Florida Region as an official at regional and national USAV events. Dave served as the Head Official for many events hosted by Palm Beach Juniors and was known for his sharp wit and strong opinions. Those that knew him well learned to look past his often-militaristic approach, which he learned while serving for 13 years as an officer in the US Navy. Dave's legacy will live on, well past his untimely passing in 2020, with those many officials that attended the training sessions and passed the rigorous evaluations given by Dave. For his many years of service to our sport and for his dedicated contributions to the Florida Region, Dave Greenlee is being added to the role with many other great leaders as a 2021 Inductee into the Florida Region Volleyball Hall of Fame.