



PRESS RELEASE

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Florida Region of USA Volleyball Announces Class of 2024 Regional Award Winners

The Florida Region of USA Volleyball announces the award recipients for their 23rd annual awards program in Orlando, FL.

Eustis, FL – March 8, 2024 – 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, growing the game, and improving the region each year. This year, the Florida Region will be presenting twenty (20) awards at the 2024 Florida Region Awards Ceremony. The ceremony will be held at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL on April 19, 2024, at 6:30 PM ET, in conjunction with the 2024 ASICS Florida Volleyball Challenge event.

Below is a list of the 2024 Award Recipients:

- Ben Jordan Golden Whistle Award (Outstanding Adult Referee) – **Marsha Gibson**
- Outstanding Male Coach Award – **Pedro Penate**, Miami Volleyball Academy
- Outstanding Female Coach Award – **Nekane Mendizabal**, Miami Hype
- Most Improved Junior Club – **Florida Elite Volleyball Academy**
- Outstanding Club Director Award – **Steve Patella**, Pure Energy VBC
- Outstanding Service Award – **Linda & Andy Pai**
- Norelli Family Extra Mile Award – **Dr. Cameron Gholampour**
- Bruce Perry Volleyball Ambassador Award – **Mark Foster** (Posthumously)
- Ernest Langford Pioneer Award – **Dr. Cecile Reynaud**
- Meritorious Service Award – **Rebecca Carstenson**
- Florida Region Hall of Fame Inductee – **Jason Berry**, Black Creek Volleyball Club
- Florida Region Hall of Fame Inductee – **Latoya Davis**, Tallahassee Juniors
- Florida Region Hall of Fame Inductee – **Sam Cibrone**, Tournament Director

In addition to the 2024 award winners, the Florida Region officials that were advanced to Jr. National or National during the 2023 season will also be recognized and presented with their official custom-embroidered jacket:

- **Gil Wartell**, National Referee
- **Adriana McLamb-Coluccio**, National Scorer
- **Angelis Perez, Jr.**, National Referee
- **Tangela Ennis, Jr.**, National Referee
- **Cristina Rexach, Jr.**, National Referee
- **Emily Wainio-Oato, Jr.**, National Referee

The venue will have seating for 300 attendees. Tickets can be purchased here:

<https://www.floridavolleyball.org/regional-awards-ceremony.html>

Additionally, this year's special guest at the awards ceremony will be Head Coach **Amy Pauly** of the Orlando Valkyries, a women's pro volleyball team operating in the Pro Volleyball Federation (PVF). Coach Pauly will be joined by several others from the Orlando Valkyries leadership team at the ceremony along with **Dr. Cecile Reynaud** from the PVF. On Saturday, April 20th, athletes and coaches from the Orlando Valkyries will attend a meet-and-greet at the ASICS Florida Volleyball Challenge during the midday. Event attendees will be able to meet the Valkyries and get an autograph or picture with their favorite pro athlete.

The Executive Director of the Florida Region, **Steve Bishop**, commented, "We'll gather once again in Orlando this April to celebrate another outstanding class of award winners that have made significant contributions to volleyball here in Florida. It will be a time of camaraderie, laughter, reflection, and excitement as we take a pause to tell their stories and recognize their many contributions. In addition, we'll present \$131,000 in scholarships to high school seniors during the evening. It is safe to say that none of this would be possible without our amazing business and corporate partners. They will each get a moment in the spotlight during this magical night of recognition."

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 19,800 members. Indoor, outdoor, and para 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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