

NEWS RELEASE

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NAIA Names University of Saint Mary A Five Star Champions of Character School

Award Honors USM Commitment to Building Student-Athlete Character

(Leavenworth, Kan.)—The University of Saint Mary has been named a Five Star Champions of Character institution by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), an award that recognizes USM’s dedication to excellent athletics and producing outstanding student-athletes.

The program honors NAIA member institutions for instilling in their student-athletes the five core Champions of Character values: integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship, and servant leadership. USM is an NAIA Division II school.

According to the NAIA, member schools were graded on demonstrated commitment to the program and earned points in five categories: character training, conduct in competition, academic focus, character recognition, and character promotion. Schools earned additional points based on exceptional student-athlete GPAs and having no game ejections during the academic year.

“We’re proud of this honor,” said USM Athletic Director Rob Miller. “This award speaks to the high caliber of our student athletes, and our coaching staff’s efforts to help mould them into well-rounded adults. Champions of Character has been around for five years, and we were one of the pilot schools. I like the direction the NAIA has gone in with the program. They’ve added some very high standards to be met, and we’re proud to say we met them.”

Over 70 percent of the NAIA’s member schools made the cut, and winners earn the right to display a banner on their websites. School presidents, athletics directors, and conference commissioners also will be recognized at the 70th Annual NAIA National Convention in April.

According to the NAIA, the Champions of Character program was built to monitor schools’ progress towards advancing character-driven intercollegiate athletics. The initiative supports performance-driven athletics while defining expectations and standards that drive successful teams and athletics departments.

”It is rewarding to see NAIA colleges, universities and conferences taking a leadership role in the NAIA’s mission to advance character-driven athletics,” said Jim Carr, NAIA president and CEO.

Saint Mary has 12 varsity sports programs—football, volleyball, baseball, softball, men’s and women’s basketball, men’s and women’s soccer, cross country, and track & field—along with co-ed cheerleading and dance. Go to www.GoSpires.com for more information on USM sports.

Visit www.ChampionsofCharacter.org for more information on the NAIA’s program.

The University of Saint Mary is a Catholic co-educational applied liberal arts university founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The University of Saint Mary is located at 4100 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan., with additional locations in Overland Park and Kansas City, Kan. Visit www.stmary.edu for more information.