

Steve Savarese
Former Executive Director
Alabama High School Athletic Association

Steve Savarese, who was a successful coach, teacher, athletic director and administrator in high school athletics for more than 47 years, became the Executive Director of the Alabama High School Athletic Association in 2007. He served in that role for 15 years, retiring in 2021.

He served on the National Federation of High School Associations Board of Directors and was president-elect for the 2021-22 school year when he retired on June 30. He also served as chairman of the NFHS Network Board of Directors and on the HOLDCO Board.

During his tenure as Executive Director of the AHSAA, Mr. Savarese has introduced a revenue-sharing plan for member schools that paid out approximately \$19.2 million in its first 10 years (2010-2021). He became a nationally recognized leader on issues dealing with high school educational athletics, especially health, safety and sportsmanship.

He believes the lessons learned through participation in educational athletics are essential to the development of our next generation of leaders.

“We must strive to achieve the same goals – good sportsmanship, fair play, the greatest possible safety for our student-athletes, and development of leadership skills that will serve students beyond athletics,” he says. “As leaders and role models, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of good sportsmanship, especially considering the behavioral challenges we face in society today. Thank you for making sportsmanship a priority in your athletic programs and your community.”

His leadership has put AHSAA championship events on solid ground financially with his boldest moves being the rotation of the popular Super 7 state football championships between the University of Alabama’s 100,000-seat Bryant-Denny Stadium and Auburn University’s 95,000-seat Jordan Hare Stadium and beginning in 2021, the new football stadium being constructed in Birmingham for the University of Alabama-Birmingham Blazers. He also guided the AHSAA expansion to its current very popular seven-classification system. Under his guidance all boys’ and girls’ championships in the AHSAA are played at outstanding neutral sites.

A man of strong faith and conviction, Mr. Savarese has been inducted into numerous Halls of Fame including the Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame’s Class of 2010. He was inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame in the Class of 2019. Before becoming the AHSAA Executive Director, Savarese was one of the nation’s most successful high school football coaches and athletic directors – winning state football titles in Kansas and Alabama.

Before becoming the AHSAA Executive Director, Savarese was one of the nation’s most successful high school football coaches and athletic directors. His football coaching record was 281-98 in 33 years – 26 in Alabama and seven in Kansas. His Daphne team won the 2001 Class 6A state championship. He also coached Douglass (Kan.) to a state title in 1978. He was a finalist for NFL High School Coach of the Year Award and has received numerous coach-of-the-year honors. Among his former players who reached the NFL were linebacker Cornelius Bennett and wide receiver Terrell Owens.

Always committed to educational-based athletics and a positive experience for students, he has gained a strong, positive reputation for stressing discipline, character, honesty and determination throughout his career.

Savarese and his wife Beth have two adult children, Christina and Steven, both married, and four grandchildren.