

Jay honored as nation's top track announcer

Written by Mike Mahon
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EUGENE, Ore. - Anyone who attends the Drake Relays or the Iowa Coed State High School Track and Field Championships knows that Mike Jay is an excellent track and field public address announcer.

Now Jay has earned the stamp of approval for being one of the best PA announcers in the country.

Jay has been named the recipient of the Scott Davis Memorial Award by the Track and Field Writers of America for excellence in announcing by a current track and field announcer.

The award came during the annual TAFWA Awards Breakfast held in conjunction with the recent NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Eugene, Ore.

"I am both humbled and honored with this award," said Jay. "It is extra special since I had the opportunity to work with Scott Davis a number of times before his passing and to be selected by media professionals in the track and field world, makes it extra special too."

"We are thrilled for Mike," said Drake Relays director Brian Brown. "It is my opinion that Mike has been the best announcer in the nation for many, many years. It is nice that he is finally getting the recognition he deserves."

Jay has been the lead announcer at the Drake Relays since 2006 as well as the lead announcer at the Iowa Coed High School State Track and Field Championships since 2005.

"Mike Jay is a former school administrator and recognizes the educational values of competition at all levels," said Bud Legg, information director for the Iowa High School Athletic Association. "His passion for track and field and athletes is the essence of his announcing which engages

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Jay's resume has grown over the years with Jay annually having been on the announcing team for the U.S. Track and Field Indoor and Outdoor Championships since 2006.

He also has been the track and field announcer at 11 NCAA Division I Indoor and Outdoor Championships as well as the 2003 NCAA Division I Cross Country Championship in Waterloo and the 2005 NCAA Division III Outdoor Track and Field Championship in Waverly.

Former longtime Drake sports information director Mike Mahon nominated Jay for the award.

"Mike has always been recognized as the best track and field PA announcer in the Midwest and it's good to see him get recognized nationally," said Mahon, who served as media coordinator of the Drake Relays from 1988-2010.

"Mike brings an unparalleled passion to track and field announcing that makes him the top college announcer in the nation. He puts a lot of hours into his work, compiling research background information that helps educate the fans. And if a race is on record pace, Mike's enthusiasm can be heard over the PA trying to help drive the runners to break that record.

"To Mike's credit other meets have started utilizing his talents hiring him to announce meets around the nation."

Jay enjoys serving as lead announcer for NCAA Regional events just as much as the national championships, having worked nine NCAA Division I Regional Cross Country meets and several NCAA Track and Field Regionals including the West Regional May 29-31 in Fayetteville, Ark.

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If that's not enough, the personable Jay has been the announcer of cross country, indoor and outdoor track and field championships for five prominent NCAA Division I conferences: Southeastern, Big Ten, Big 12, Mountain Pacific Sports Federation and Missouri Valley Conference.

Jay also is the regular home meet announcer for the University of Iowa, University of Alabama and University of Nebraska.

He piles up a lot of frequent flyer miles visiting the West Coast several times throughout the season, traveling to Seattle, Wash. to cover Washington Huskies home indoor meets as well as Stanford, Calif. to announce the Stanford Invitational and Peyton Jordan Invitational during the outdoor campaign.

Jay retired from 26 years as a high school track and field and cross country coach at Columbus Community High School in Columbus Junction and now works for Northwestern Mutual.

Jay believes in giving back to the sport that has given him so much pleasure and countless opportunities.

He is currently serving as the 2nd vice-present of the Iowa Association of Track Coaches, chairman of the Iowa Association of Track Coaches Hall of Fame Committee as well as being a member of the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union Track and Field Hall of Fame Committee.