



Harding Academy senior recognized with national sportsmanship award

October 31, 2023

In the realm of sports, we often emphasize victory above all else, but the truth is that sportsmanship is just as important, if not more so.

Enter, Will Adkins, a twelfth grader at Harding Academy, whose conduct on the sports field has set an extraordinary example of gracious sportsmanship. Not only is Will an accomplished athlete, serving as captain of the football team and earning all-state recognition in track, but he is also a definitive display of leadership. He is part of the school's Student Athlete Leadership Team and leads the student section as a Yell Leader, setting themes for each contest.



Will Adkins

In October, Will received the NFHS Student-Athlete Award of Excellence, an accolade presented by the TSSAA and the National Federation of State High School Associations in recognition of his demonstration of exceptional sportsmanship. He takes the lead in fostering a positive atmosphere during games, always supporting teammates and steering clear of negative taunts. When the crowd starts to overstep, Will is one who steps in and redirects his classmates' cheers to ensure everyone stays within the standards of sportsmanship. Notably, he has created new cheering rhythms during volleyball games that keep the spirit high without bordering on aggression.

Will's influence extends beyond boundaries as he inspires other student leaders to exhibit positive sportsmanship, be it on the field, track or the stands. He commands respect and admiration from his peers as well as the younger students, embodying the values of respect, kindness, and positivity.

When he's not actively participating or encouraging good sportsmanship at games, Will enjoys spending time with family and friends, tinkering with cars, gardening, and playing with his pets.

Not only does Will's actions embody what the world needs more of, but they also serve as a reminder that being a good sport can bring even greater rewards than victory itself. True sportsmanship's impact transcends the game, setting a compelling example for all. Will's leadership and integrity act as a beacon, motivating everyone to take a higher road, not just in sports, but in life.

With more students like Will, the future of school-based educational athletics looks bright. After all, sports isn't just about trophies and wins, but about learning life lessons, building character, and leading by example on and off the field.

Nominate a student in your school today! Please use the form linked below to share a story about a student-athlete you know who has demonstrated exceptional sportsmanship, integrity, and ethics. If you have any questions about the award or the nomination process, please contact Courtney Brunetz (cbrunetz@tssaa.org).

[More about Student-Athlete Award of Excellence](#)



Will Adkins - Cheering Section