SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD PRESENTATION

2A GIRLS VOLLEYBALL – ST. WALBURG (2023)

**Good afternoon and thank you for inviting me to ST. WALBURG to share in your celebration today. I bring you greetings on behalf of the Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association, our President Al Wandler and 350+ member schools.**

**I would like to start by saying Thank You to the PARENTS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION, NORTH WEST DISTRICT, and TEACHING/COACHING STAFF. Your support is what allows school sport to make a difference in the education of student-athletes across the province.**

**We have come together today to applaud the accomplishments of THE ST. WALBURG GIRLS VOLLEYBALL TEAM. They have shown their skill on the VOLLEYBALL COURT with their successes at games, tournaments, and playoffs throughout the year; in addition, today they are being recognized for their display of sportsmanship.**

**The SHSAA and Sask Milk have had a longstanding partnership to ensure high school sport is available across the province. Through this sponsorship, milk is provided at all provincial championships! In 1996, Sask Milk began sponsoring sportsmanship banners for teams that exemplify the true spirit of sportsmanship at provincial championships and throughout the season. When a team wins the sportsmanship award, the entire school wins, as Sask Milk donates milk for the entire school! Let’s hear it for Sask Milk and the team!**

**The ‘blue banner’, is a highly respected honor. The gymnasiums which display these banners are in schools which strive to make sportsmanship, respect, and responsibility a daily habit – a part of their school culture. The team is a reflection of the school and the entire student body - the expectations that the school has and the expectations that you have for each other day in and day out is what gets reflected by your school programs when they are representing your school. For this reason, the Saskatchewan Milk Marketing Board will be providing milk to each student at the school.**

**This recognition of sportsmanship is obviously a true sign of positive school culture that ST. WALBURG has- the theme of sportsmanship, responsibility, and respect is evidenced by your performance this season. This is the 3rd sportsmanship banner for the School – The girls volleyball team won in 2012, 2015 and now in 2022! I would like to thank the entire staff of the school both past and present that have helped contribute to the many programs that teach not only sports skills but the skills of citizenship.**

**Why did the ST. WALBURG GIRLS VOLLEYBALL Team get selected as the Sportsmanship Award winner this year? At each SHSAA provincial team championship, committees observe the conduct of the players, coaches, and fans. They watch for interaction with the hosts, the other teams, and the officials. Over the course of the Provincial weekend AT GULL LAKE & SWIFT CURRENT, the GIRLS played some very intense games. The focus and respect with which the team played remained consistent. The demeanor of the team reflected the demeanor of the coaches. They continued to play every game in a respectful manner regardless of the score and this made it an enjoyable athletic experience for their opposition, fans, and officials.**

**The team had a wonderful journey to the provincial championship. The team had the good fortune to host conference volleyball the weekend of the wild winter snow storm. Home court advantage worked, and they won conferences over Maidstone who had beat them in the round robin. They were now off to regionals and a road trip to Rosthern. After a stellar round robin and an excellent semi-final match the team was in the final and guaranteed a trip to provincials. After a 2 set final, St. Walburg was the regional champions and were preparing for another road trip to Gull Lake!**

**Once at provincials, the team saw varied competition and finished the round robin in a tie-breaker situation. This created a quarter final match against the eventual provincial champions from Naicam. The team competed hard the entire weekend and did not make excuses or lay blame on the volunteers or the officials. They were grateful for the opportunity to compete against other top 2A schools from around the province.**

**Throughout the entire weekend, the team show great sportsmanship. The coaching staff was second to none, demonstrating that competition is healthy, but education through high school sport is invaluable in the development of students. The St. Walburg fans were positive, cheering the GIRLS on, and giving them support.**

**SHSAA Board Rep, Cathy Morrow, had this to say about the team “The St. Walburg Girls Volleyball Team were overall a great team on and off the court. Their coaches were very respectful of the officiating as were their fans. It was nice to watch the team whether they were winning or losing to perform the best they could. Great team, great coaches and awesome fans!**

**Congratulations To the ST. WALBURG GIRLS VOLLEYBALL team, their coaches, and their supporters. You have made yourselves, your school, your community, and the SHSAA very proud of your athletic and sportsmanship accomplishments at the 2A GIRLS PROVINCIAL VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIP!**