

# 59th Annual

**William F. Powley Memorial  
Service to Wrestling Award  
presented to**

## **Mike Tota**

The Powley award recognizes decades of dedication to wrestling

### **Head Wrestling Coach at River Dell High School**

306-96-1 Dual Meet Record  
3 State Finalists  
8x League Champions  
8x Bergen County Group Champions  
District 8 Champions  
State Sectional Champions - 1st title for RD in 23 years.  
4x Region 2 and Bergen County Group I/II Team of the Year  
7 Individual State Medals

### **Coaching Awards**

7x League Coach of the Year  
5x District Coach of the Year  
2x Bergen County Coach of the Year  
Region 2 Coach of the Year  
North Jersey Coach of the Year  
Region 2 Sportsmanship Award Winner

### **HS/College Experience**

New Milford High School - Region finalist  
University of Scranton-3x Varsity Letter Winner

### **Coaching Experience prior to River Dell**

New Milford - Volunteer Assistant Coach  
Northern Highlands - Assistant Coach

I began wrestling in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and then wrestled at New Milford HS for coaches Tim Doherty and Jim Marcella. This is where I learned that hard work wins matches. I am still close with high school teammates. I then went on to wrestle at the University of Scranton and earned 3 varsity letters. After graduation, I was a volunteer coach at my alma mater New Milford HS where my brother Brain was an assistant coach. My first paid job was at Northern Highlands under Dave Heitman. Coach Heitman taught me a lot about running a program and making sure the athletes know that you care about them as people as well as wrestlers. After six years at Ridgewood High School, I am in my thirteenth year as a Social Studies/Special Education Teacher at RDHS.

Wrestling is easily the toughest sport and to be successful it truly must be a way of life. The sport presents the opportunity to learn many life lessons including discipline, sacrifice, respect, self-reflection and the value of hard work. During my time at River Dell, we always preached working harder and being better conditioned than our opponent and winning the right way. The program always strove to have team success, individual post season success and above all making better young men.

I would like to thank all our wrestlers for buying into our program and always putting the team above themselves. I would like to thank all the great assistant coaches I have had over the years for their time and dedication to our program, especially Jared Glick, Paul Wyka and our new head coach Nick Baranello. I also would like to thank the BCCA tournament committee for this prestigious award. My wife Jennifer and son Luke have been very supportive of my love of wrestling and I want to thank them for everything.

Lastly, coaching wrestling done the right way is grueling, exhausting and ultimately very rewarding. Coaching is all about relationships. As I step down from the position of Head Coach, it is these relationships with wrestlers, assistant coaches, opposing coaches and officials that I will miss the most.