



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

WAYZATA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC TRAINER CHRIS THEIN NAMED FRED ZAMBERLETTI AWARD WINNER

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – April 1, 2025 – The Minnesota Chapter of the National Football Foundation is excited to announce that Wayzata High School athletic trainer Chris Thein has been named this year’s recipient of the Fred Zamberletti Award. Thein will be recognized during this summer’s Minnesota Football Honors television show.

“Chris has helped countless athletes achieve their optimal performance, recover and get back on the field safely. His attention to detail and passion for serving student-athletes shines across the local community,” said Todd Fultz, President of the Minnesota Chapter of the National Football Foundation. “We are very excited to honor Chris during the Minnesota Football Honors television show.”

Chris Thein is a licensed Athletic Trainer and Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician with Twin Cities Orthopedics. He has served as the athletic trainer for Wayzata High School for the past 26 years. Thein is also a certified American Red Cross and American Heart Association Basic Life Supporter for M Health Fairview Emergency Response Training.

Thein, a 1983 Clara City High School graduate, was a two-time all-conference selection in two sports and a state tournament runner-up in wrestling. Following graduation, Chris focused his attention on the sports medicine field. He earned his undergraduate degree in Athletic Training from North Dakota State University in 1987. During his time at NDSU, he gained excellent experience caring for athletes in many different sports, including football.

After completing his master’s degree in Athletic Training from Illinois State University in 1988 and passing the 1988 NATA Certification exam, Chris started his career in suburban Chicago with the University of Chicago Sports Medicine outreach program. In 1990, Chris returned to the Twin Cities and became the Fairview Institute for Athletic Medicine staff athletic trainer at Cooper High School until 1997. In the fall of 1997, Thein was assigned to Wayzata High School as the M Health Fairview staff athletic trainer.

Thein has won numerous awards for his outstanding accomplishments as an athletic trainer. He earned a company Athletic Trainer Award for providing Basic Life Support during the 1992 MSHSL Prep Bowl. Over the past 35 years, he has been assigned to numerous state tournament medical staffs, including 20 state wrestling tournaments in a row and dozens of Prep Bowl games. Thein has conducted numerous local, state and regional sports medicine and emergency medicine presentations. Most notably: the Great Lakes Athletic Trainers Association, Minnesota Athletic Trainers Association and many Twin Cities Marathon/Fairview sponsored sports medicine conferences, along with three North Memorial Emergency Medical Services spring conference presentations.

The *Fred Zamberletti Award* honors the late Fred Zamberletti, the Minnesota Vikings’ first head athletic trainer. While working for the organization, Zamberletti became an athletic training pioneer. After his long career as the Vikings’ head

athletic trainer, he was named the team's coordinator for medical services (1998-2001) and senior consultant/team historian (2002-2018).

Previous Fred Zamberletti Award winners:

- 2009: Gary Smith
- 2010: Jim Marshall
- 2011: Gordy Graham
- 2012: Gary Reinholtz
- 2013: Scott Westermann
- 2014: Chuck Barta
- 2015: Roger Casey
- 2016: Missy Strauch
- 2017: Terry Carlyle
- 2018: Joel Krekelberg
- 2019: Eric Sugarman
- 2021: Doug Nelson
- 2022: Scott Bierscheid
- 2023: Karen Karlson
- 2024: Keith Wiedrich

Minnesota Football Honors is hosting a show to honor this year's high school, college and Minnesota Vikings award winners. An official broadcast date will be announced later this summer on www.minnesotafootballhonors.com. To view a statewide map of past and present Minnesota Football Honors Award Winners, [visit this site](#).

About the Minnesota Chapter of the National Football Foundation:

The Minnesota Chapter of The National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame is a local non-profit organization whose mission is to promote amateur football's ability to develop leadership, sportsmanship, competitive spirit and academic excellence in Minnesota's young people. The Minnesota Chapter recognizes legendary football icons, college football Hall of Famers and Minnesota's top high school and college football scholar-athletes. For more information, visit www.nffmn.org, or Facebook ([@MNFootballHonors](#)) and Twitter ([@NFFMN](#)).

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