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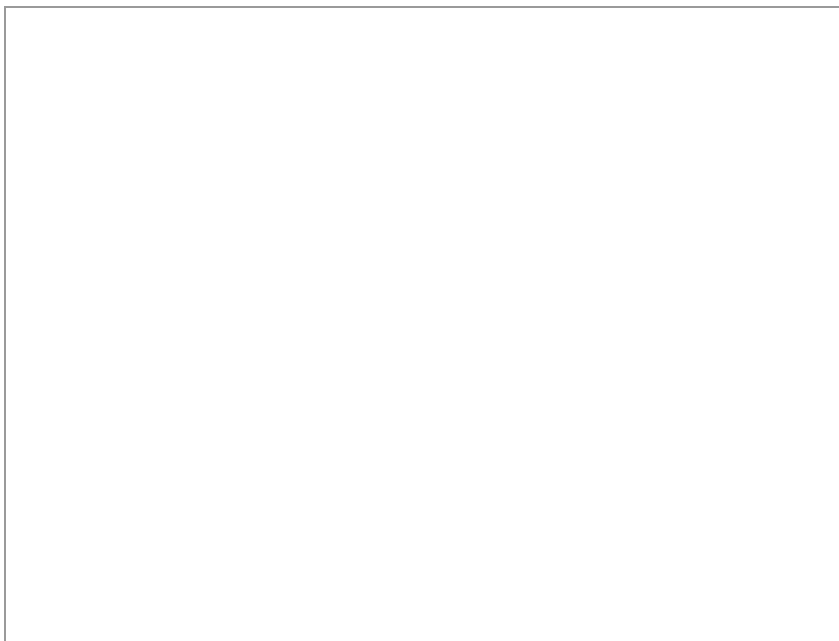
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## West Roxbury hockey coach earns national honor for 'amazing' display of sportsmanship

Posted by Matt Rocheleau February 16, 2011 12:01 PM

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(Courtesy: Catholic Memorial)

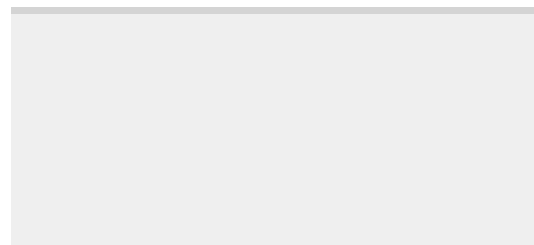
Catholic Memorial JV hockey coach John Huether (center, above the man in the Atlanta Braves hat) will be honored at a national sportsmanship ceremony in St. Louis later this spring. This photo is from last season.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

**A West Roxbury resident and high school hockey coach will be honored at an annual ceremony this spring that highlights “the most-remarkable examples of sportsmanship” from around the country.**

Catholic Memorial junior varsity hockey coach John Huether performed a series of selfless acts while tending to a referee who slipped and was knocked unconscious during a weekend game against rival school Xaverian in January.

The 46-year-old coach and nurse showed a level of care and sportsmanship toward the referee, who he had never met prior, that league officials later described as being above and beyond the norm; from his immediate on-ice response after the scary fall, to signaling players to salute the official as he



was escorted from the arena in Milton, to sitting in a hospital waiting room for two hours alongside the referee's two children, to his modesty afterward.

"It was the ultimate sign of respect and sportsmanship," the 51-year-old referee, Richard Sweeney, a Dorchester native and former Boston Police officer who has been involved in hockey since his youth, told Boston.com last month.

After the ordeal, Sweeney e-mailed school officials hoping his gratitude would make its way to Huether, which it eventually did. The e-mail also passed some other league officials on the way, before it was forwarded to the Globe and Boston.com.

"We read about John's amazing act and decided he should be honored," Ted Breidenthal, director of the Citizenship Through Sports Alliance, wrote in an e-mail to Boston.com this week.



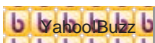

In late April, the CTSA, which bills itself as the largest coalition of professional and amateur athletic organizations in the country focused on character in sport, will co-host the 12th annual National Sportsmanship Awards in St. Louis where Huether will be one of around 15 people awarded for exemplary displays of sportsmanship.

Breidenthal said event organizers poured over 250 to 300 heartwarming stories for this year's ceremony, "and only honor what we feel are the very best acts of sportsmanship in the country."

Over the years, the sportsmanship ceremony has honored notable professional sports figures, including baseball Hall of Famer Tony Gwynn, two-time Olympic medalist Michelle Kwan, seven-time NBA All-Star Grant Hill, six-time NFL Pro Bowl running back Jerome Bettis, and local favorite superstars Ray Allen and Curt Schilling, both honored before they joined their respective Boston squads.

The sportsmanship coalition's director said both Sweeney and Huether plan to attend the event co-hosted by the St. Louis Sports Commission; the referee has been invited to join others on-stage to help present the coach with a crystal trophy.

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