

## The Stolz Boys: A Three-Generation Chieftains Legacy

by Kerry J. Byrnes (OHS Class of '63)

**Denny Stolz**, the first of The Stolz Boys, actually was an athlete at and a graduate of – not Okemos High – but rather Mason High School (about 11 miles from Okemos), and later a coach throughout his working life. But, as the older brother of **Stan Stolz** (four years his junior), Denny would serve as a first generation role model for Stan who also played sports for and graduated from Mason High School. Later Stan would become head coach of the boys' basketball team at Okemos High, following retirement of Bob Baker, the predecessor head coach. Further, Denny Stolz is the uncle of Stan's son, **Dan Stolz**, the first of The Stolz Boys to play basketball for and graduate from Okemos High School. Dan's father, Stan, was Dan's varsity coach during his junior and senior seasons. Years later Dan followed in his father's footsteps; when Stan stepped down as head coach of Okemos High boys' basketball team, he was succeeded by his son Dan who had been Stan's assistant varsity coach. Years later, Dan's son, **Scott Stolz**, also played basketball for the Chieftains under his father's (Dan's) tutelage before graduating from Okemos High.

Thus, the story of **The Stolz Boys** actually begins with the years that Denny and Stan played sports for Mason High School. Their athletic careers led to both, over 60 years later, being inducted in 2015 into the Mason High School Athletic Hall of Fame as was reported by the *Ingham County Community News* on July 23, 2015 (see excerpt below)



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Brothers Denny and Stan Stolz had accomplished athletic careers in multiple sports at Mason High School and at Alma College.

What makes them special is their athletic talent on the field is matched by their talent as coaches on the sidelines.

Both are members of the Alma College Athletic Hall of Fame as well as the Greater Lansing Area Sports Hall of Fame. Fittingly, the brothers are adding another hall of fame recognition to their resumes, as both are inductees into the Mason High School Athletic Hall of Fame's class of 2015.

Both brothers attended Alma College and competed in multiple sports. Denny was a four-year letter winner in both football and baseball. Stan was a three-year letter winner in basketball and baseball, and he was the unanimous choice of the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association as first baseman his sophomore year.

Further, over the past 20 years, all three senior Stolz Boys (Denny, Stan, and Dan) also were inducted into [The Greater Lansing Area Sports Hall of Fame](#): Stan in 1999, Denny in 2001, and Dan in 2017 (more information on each below),

### Denny Stolz



**Dennis “Denny” Earl Stolz** (born September 12, 1934) was a graduate of Mason High School (Class of '51).

Denny, a 1951 graduate, and Stan, who graduated four years later, had similar high school athletic careers. As was customary of that era, they didn't specialize in one sport. They played football, basketball and baseball — and excelled at all three.

In total, Denny received 10 varsity letters, four in baseball and three each in football and basketball. In his junior season on the football team, he was rated one of the top fullbacks in the conference and helped lead his team to a Capital Circuit co-championship.

As a senior, Denny displayed an impressive effort in all three sports. A co-captain and starting halfback on the gridiron, he helped the team achieve a 6–3 record. On the basketball court, his team finished 13–2 overall — at one point reeling off eight consecutive wins. He added another championship to his resume as the team finished in a three-way tie for first place in the conference. On the diamond, the hard-hitting catcher helped his team to a 7–3 record for the second consecutive year.

While Denny excelled in three different sports at Mason High School, the focus of his working career in sports would become football (while the focus of Stan's career would be basketball). At Alma College Denny played football and other sports, graduated in 1955, and returned there in 1965 to become the head football coach (1965–1970).

His coaching career began in 1955 at Haslett High School, where in eight seasons he amassed a 40–13–3 overall record. A short stint at Eastern High School segued into a step up to the collegiate level, taking over a struggling Alma College program without a winning season in a decade.

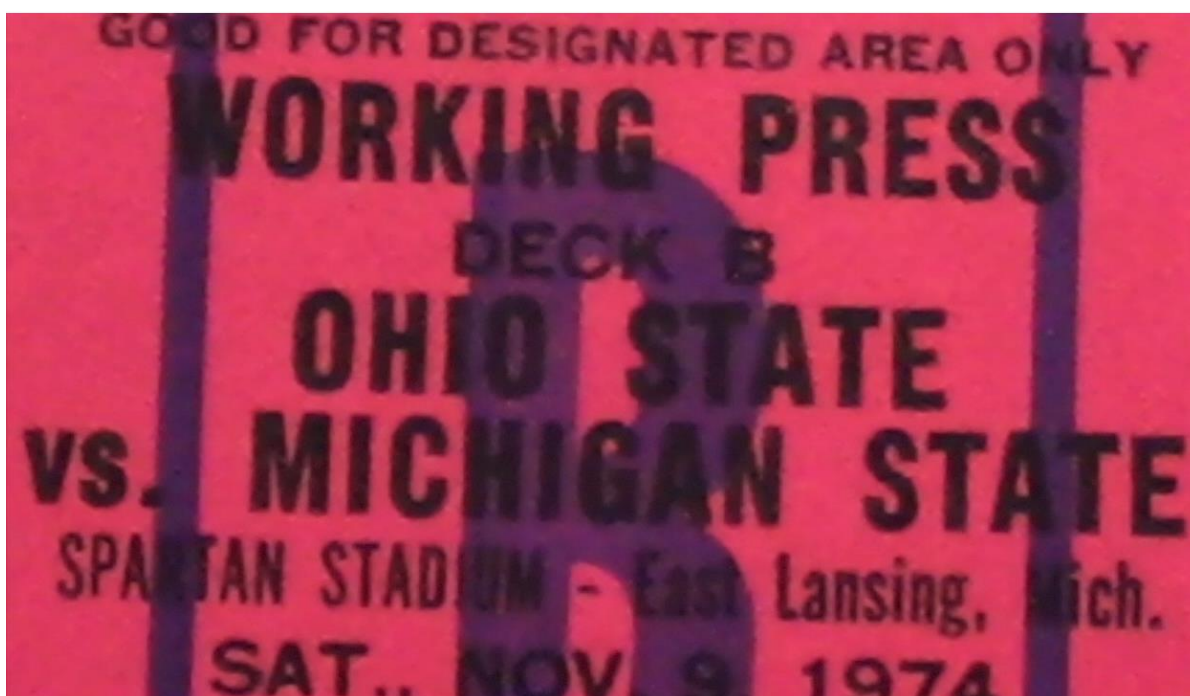
In just two seasons, he built the Alma Scots into a winning program. MIAA Coach of the Year in 1967, he led the team to an undefeated 8–0 season in 1967 and again in 1968, as well as three MIAA championships in 1967, 1968 and 1970.

Denny's success at Alma landed him a place as defensive coordinator at Michigan State University in 1971, and by 1973, he had taken over for Duffy Daugherty as head coach. In three seasons leading the Spartans, he totaled a 19–13–1 overall record and was named Big Ten Coach of the Year in 1974.

That same year his team upset the No.1-ranked Ohio State Buckeyes 16–13 in what some consider to be one of MSU's all-time greatest victories.

After leaving MSU following the 1975 season, he had two more coaching stints, first at Bowling Green University and then at San Diego State University. In nine seasons at Bowling Green, he won Mid-American Conference (MAC) championships in 1982 and 1985 and was named MAC Football Coach of the Year both seasons. At San Diego State, he won the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) championship in 1986 and was named WAC Football Coach of the Year.

Over his career coaching, Denny held head football coach positions at Michigan State (1973-1975), Bowling Green State (1977-1985), and San Diego State (1986-1988). He compiled a career college football won-loss-tie record of 125–93–2. In the early 1970s, Denny was the defensive coordinator and linebacker coach at Michigan State for two seasons before being promoted, on December 12, 1972, to succeed Duffy Daugherty as head coach. In 1974, Denny was honored as Big Ten Coach of the Year. In his final season as Spartan head coach, Denny's team compiled an impressive 7-4 record. One of those wins ended Miami (Ohio)'s 24-game unbeaten streak ([Source](#)). Denny's final record at Michigan State was 19-13-1. Perhaps his brightest achievement at MSU was the Spartans' November 9, 1974 victory over #1 Ohio State as recounted by Stolz in the YouTube video below.



### Denny Stolz Looks Back on Spartans 1974 Victory over Undefeated #1 Ohio State

Michigan State Spartans ( <i>Big Ten Conference</i> ) (1973–1975)							
1973	Michigan State	5–6	4–4	T–4th			
1974	Michigan State	7–3–1	6–1–1	3rd		18	12
1975	Michigan State	7–4	4–4	T–3rd			
Michigan State:		19–13–1	14–9–1				

### Denny Stolz's Michigan State Football Coaching Record



Unfortunately, Stolz's three-year tenure as head coach of the Spartans was marred by a player recruiting scandal that began in April 1975 under then-head coach Denny Stolz.

In January 1976, the NCAA revealed the Spartans' football program employed illegal recruiting practices and illegal fundraising. Also among the 70 charges were that MSU gave players use of cars and coaches gave recruits gifts.

The football program, which denied many of the charges, received a severe punishment – three years of probation that prevented the Spartans from playing on television and suffering a bowl ban that prevented MSU from going to the 1978 Rose Bowl after winning a share of the Big Ten championship. The Spartans also lost 10 scholarships for 1976, then five over each of the following three years. The university also was required to forfeit any money received from the Big Ten for television appearances of other member schools.

“The university acknowledges that some violations took place but we regret that the NCAA Council was unable to accept our proof of innocence in the matters appealed to it,” then-MSU president Clifton Wharton told The Associated Press at the time.

Stolz and then-athletic director Burt Smith were forced out by [MSU President] Wharton less than two months after the NCAA's findings. ([Source](#))



An NCAA scandal in 1976 cost athletic director Burt Smith, right, and football coach Dennis Stolz their jobs. (Photo: Associated Press file photo)

In the end, on January 25, 1976, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) placed the Spartans football program on three years' probation, prohibiting the Spartans from any television and bowl game appearances through the 1978 season. At the behest of university president Clifton R. Wharton Jr. and the board of trustees, Denny resigned just over seven weeks later on March 16, 1976 ([Source](#)). But Stolz went on to hold head coaching positions at both Bowling Green State and San Diego State.

In 2001 Stolz was inducted into [The Greater Lansing Area Sports Hall of Fame](#), the web site for which presents the following highlights of Denny Stolz's career in sports.

## Denny Stolz – 2001

☆ Inducted: 2001

### Mason High School

Football, Basketball, Baseball – 1948-1951.

### Alma College

Football, Baseball – 1951-1955.

### Coaching – Football

Haslett High School – 1955-1962.

Lansing Eastern High School – 1963-1964.

Alma College – 1965-1970.

Won three MIAA Championships – 1967, 1968, 1970.

MIAA Coach of the Year – 1967.

Michigan State University (Defensive Coordinator) – 1971, 1972.

Michigan State University (Head Coach) – 1973-1975.

Big Ten Coach of the Year – 1974.

Bowling Green State University – 1977-1985.

Won two MAC Championships – 1982, 1985.

MAC Coach of the Year – 1982, 1985.

San Diego State University – 1986-1988.

Won WAC Championship – 1986.

WAC Coach of the Year – 1986.

Overall college head coaching record – 125-93-2.



## Denny Stolz

### Biographical details

**Born** September 12, 1934 (age 85)

### Playing career

1954 [Alma](#)

### Coaching career (HC unless noted)

1955–1962 [Haslett HS \(MI\)](#)

1963–1964 [Eastern HS \(MI\)](#)

1965–1970 [Alma](#)

1971–1972 [Michigan State \(DC\)](#)

1973–1975 [Michigan State](#)

1977–1985 [Bowling Green](#)

1986–1988 [San Diego State](#)

### Head coaching record

**Overall** 125–93–2 (college)

**Bowls** 0–3

### Accomplishments and honors

#### Championships

3 [MIAA](#) (1967–1968, 1970)

2 [MAC](#) (1982, 1985)

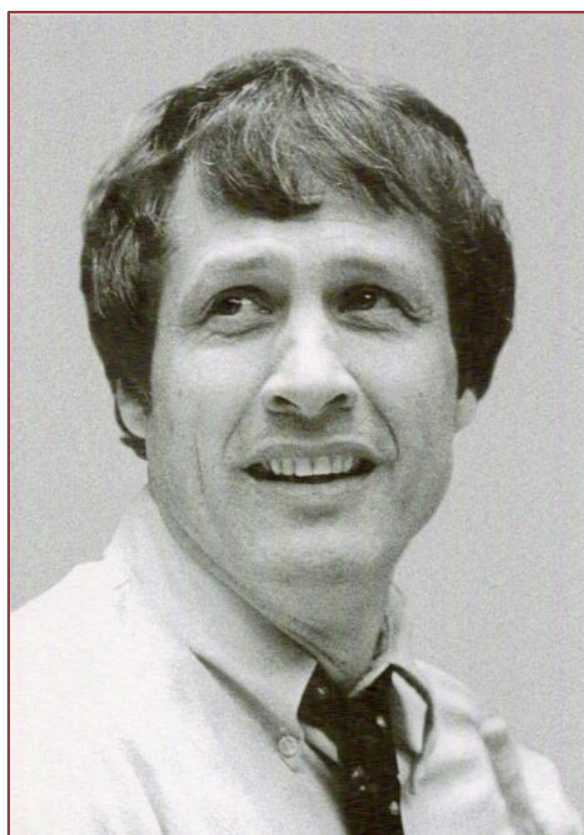
1 [WAC](#) (1986)

#### Awards

[Big Ten Coach of the Year](#) (1974)

2× [MAC Coach of the Year](#) (1982, 1985)

## Stanley “Stan” Stolz



While at Mason High School, as Denny's younger brother,

Stan earned varsity letters, four in baseball, three in basketball and two in football. As a sophomore, he was a member of a Capital Circuit co-championship football team.

But he showcased his talent most on the basketball court. An elite shooter, he led the team in scoring as a junior and senior. As a senior, he set school records in both points in a game (38) and points per game average (25) — in an era with no three-point line.

In his senior year, Stan was the leading hitter on the baseball team and tallied six home runs on his way to leading the team to a 9–3 record and a share of the Capital Circuit championship.

After attending and playing sports at Mason High School and Alma College, **Stan** began a 33-year career as a varsity basketball coach in Michigan, amassing a career won-loss record of 490-183.

He first coached at Sheridan High School and then Central Montcalm High School, but the majority of his coaching tenure was at Okemos, where he totaled a 444–117 record in 27 seasons.

In total, his teams secured 19 league championships (18 at Okemos), 11 district championships, four state semifinals appearances and two state championships.

From 1968 to 1994, the Okemos Chieftains were a dominant basketball program in the Lansing area as well as statewide. Stan's most impressive stretch occurred from 1980 through 1982 when his teams won 34 consecutive games — the second-longest all-time Class B winning streak in the state.

What's more, Chieftain teams won back-to-back Class B state championships in 1980–81 and 1981–82.

In two seasons, neither of which were state championship years, Stan was named State Coach of the Year by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan. Other noteworthy accomplishments include induction into the BCAM Hall of Fame in 1988 and nomination as National Coach of the Year in 1990.

He also served as athletic director at Okemos High School from 1972 to 1994.

In 1999, Stan was inducted into [The Greater Lansing Area Sports Hall of Fame](#).

☆ Inducted: 1999

**Mason High School**

Football, Basketball, Baseball.

**Alma College**

Basketball, Baseball.

Inducted into the Alma College Sports Hall of Fame.

**Coaching**

Boys Basketball – 35 years – 490 wins.

Okemos High School.

Class "B" State Champions – 1981, 1982.

19 League Titles, 11 District Titles, 5 Regional Titles.

Class "B" Coach of the Year – 1980, 1984.

National Coach of the Year Nominee.

Inducted into the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan (BCAM) Hall of Fame – 1988.

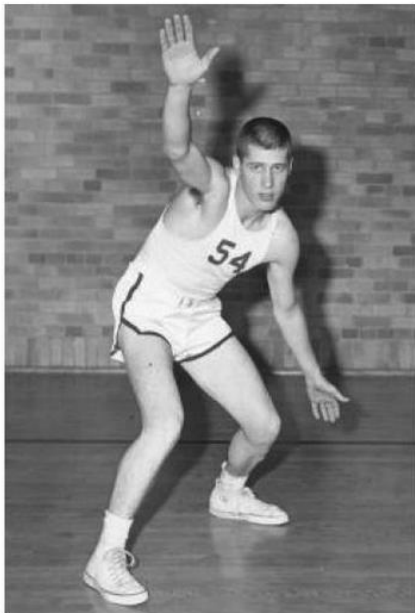
Okemos Athletic Director – 23 years.

In 2015, Stan was inducted into the inaugural class of the Mason High School Athletic Hall of Fame.



## MASON HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

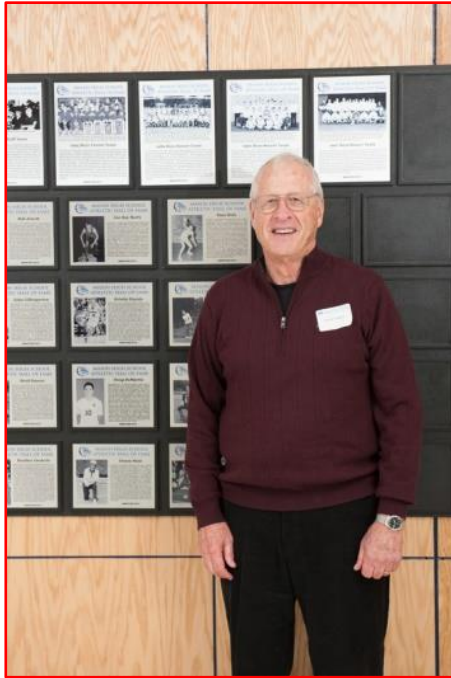
### Stan Stolz



Stan Stolz, a 1955 graduate, earned nine varsity letters in football, basketball, and baseball. His football team won a league championship in 1952. In 1953, his basketball team won a league championship. An elite shooter on the basketball court, Stolz finished his career with 861 total points. In 1955, he set school records in both points in a game (38) and points per game average (25)—accomplishments made all the more impressive considering there was not yet a three-point line. In 1955, he was the leading hitter on the baseball team and tallied six home runs on his way to leading the team to a 9–3 record and a league championship. At Alma College, Stolz was a three-year letter winner in basketball and baseball, and he was the unanimous choice of the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association as first baseman in 1957. Stolz had an accomplished high school varsity basketball coaching career, amassing a 490–183 record in 33 years, including 27 at Okemos High School. In total, his teams secured 19 league championships, including 18 at Okemos; 11 district championships; four state semifinals appearances; and back-to-back Class B state championships in 1980–81 and 1981–82. Stolz is also a member of the Alma College Athletic Hall of Fame, the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan Hall of Fame, the Greater Lansing Area Sports Hall of Fame, and the Okemos High School Athletic Hall of Fame.

**INDUCTED 2015**





Also, in 2015, Stan was inducted into the inaugural class of the **Okemos High School Athletic Hall of Fame**.

**Stanley Stolz** – Former boys basketball coach and athletic director; coached 2 boys basketball state championship teams ('81, '82); served as athletic director at OHS for 23 years

One of Stan's former Chieftain players, Greg Mitchell (Hope men's basketball coach as of 2014), recalls the influence that Coach Stolz had him ([Source](#)):

There wasn't a day that went by where Greg Mitchell wasn't in his driveway putting up shots.

It was a love for the game that made him venture outside his family home in Lansing decades ago, but there was something else that stirred him.

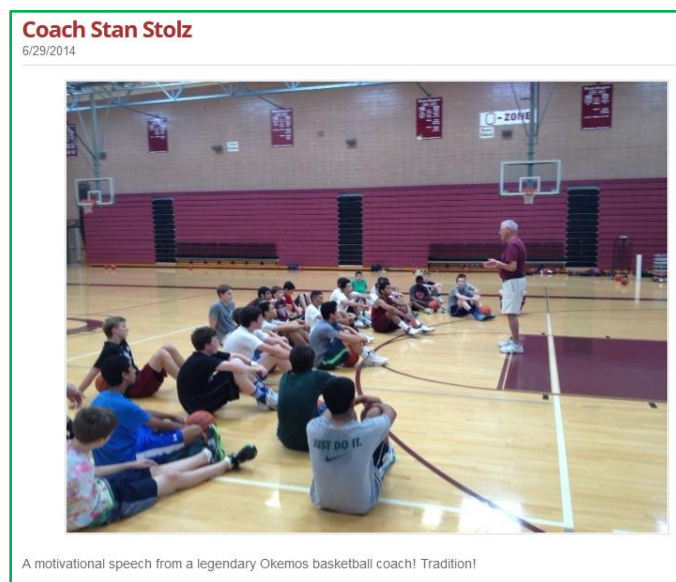
In high school at then-perennial state title contender, Okemos, Mitchell thought of the day when his coach, Stan Stolz, might one day be driving by.

If that time ever came – and it did one day – he better be in that driveway working on his game. ...

It was Stolz who lit a spark in him to have passion and fire for the game. Mitchell recalls a pregame speech where Stolz spoke to his Okemos team and said, "If this game can't get you excited, then you shouldn't be playing." "For some reason he just really inspired me," Mitchell said. "He was a very intense coach and he wasn't a real pat-you-on-your-back guy. He expected you to play the right way and I gravitated toward that."

"That's a credit to him to make the game so important to want to impress him and be that guy that can be a leader." ([Source](#))

Years later Stan still reaches out to inspire aspiring young Okemos High School basketball players to improve their game (see photo below).



**Former Coach Stan Stolz Speaking to OHS Boys Team (June 11, 2014)**

## Dan Stolz



**Dan Stolz** was the first of The Stolz Boys to play basketball for Okemos High, playing on the freshman team ('71-'72), junior varsity team ('72-'73), and varsity team ('73-'74 and '74-'75). Some photos of Stan's years playing for the Chieftains are shared below.

Freshmen (below); Mike Bozzo, Fred Schaberg, Coach Ron Mott, Duff Schroeder, Dan Stolz, Mark Kreps; back; Tom Magee, Greg Patrick, John Pudliner, Mike Hegel, Jim Bobb, Stan Drobac, Rick Hebden, Mike McCauley.



**Okemos '71-'72 Freshman Squad (Dan Stolz #25)**

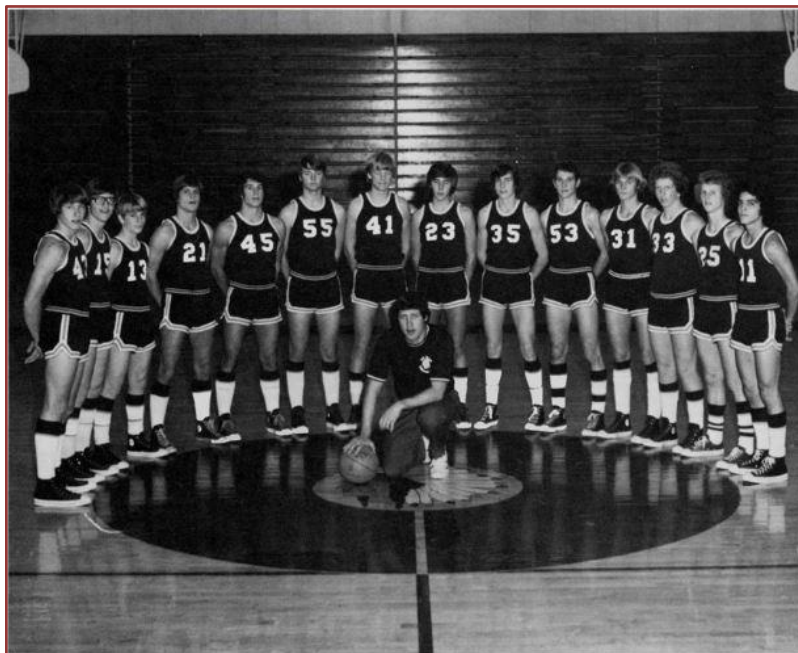


Junior Varsity Basketball, left to right, back row: Coach Norv Burgett, Phil Winters, John Pudliner, Mike Hagel, Jim Bobb, Mike McCaskey. Middle row, l to r: Stan Drobas, Tom Magee, Tom Rubendunst, Rick Heiden, Duff Schroeder. Front row, l to r: Mark Kreps, Mike Bozao, Fred Schaberg, Dan Stolz.



### Okemos '72-'73 Junior Varsity Squad (Dan Stolz #25)

During Dan's next two seasons, playing on the varsity squad, he was coached by his father (Stan Stolz). During the '73-'74 season, Dan wore a #43 jersey but during the '74-'75 season he wore #55.



From left to right: Dan Stolz, Tom Magee, Fred Schaberg, Scott Parisian, Chip Ehlinger, John Pudliner, Greg Lott, Mike Duffy, Tom Rubendunst, Kirk Bailey, Ron Mitchell, Dan Putman, Mike McCauley, Terry DeMarco, Coach Stan Stolz.



Dan Stolz

### Okemos '73-'74 Varsity Squad (Dan Stolz #43 - first from left)

Coach Stan Stolz (kneeling with basketball)





**Okemos '74-'75 Varsity Squad (Dan Stolz #55) & Senior Yearbook Photo**

**Coach Stan Stolz ((leaning against locker)**



**Dan Stolz Guard**

After watching the two season opening victories, it is no surprise to Cheiftain fans that the 1974-75 Capital Circuit Championship rests at Okemos. Coach Stan Stolz, who has led the mighty Chiefs seven seasons, celebrated his 100th career victory on Jan. 28. The fans can be proud of the team which showed not only a winning determination on the court, but also displayed attitudes and manners throughout the season befitting Champions. The team was led by Srs., Dan Stolz and John Pudliner. Eight lettermen return next year to be led by Jr., Mike McKearney and Soph., Dan Putman, who both started every game this season.

### **Dan Stolz (#55) Contributes to Stan Stolz's 100<sup>th</sup> Victory at Okemos High**

Following graduation from Alma College and coaching at Williamston High School, Dan returned to Okemos High to continue his coaching career, initially as an assistant to his father (Stan Stolz) and then as head coach for 18 seasons (1994-2012), while serving a total of 31 years on the staff. Of special note, with Dan's father (Stan Stolz) serving as head coach of the Chieftains the preceding 26 seasons (1968-1994), there was a Stolz coaching Chieftains' varsity squad for 44 consecutive years. Dan Stolz's 2006 team made it to the class "A" state finals before losing in double overtime to Saginaw Arthur Hill 85-83. His 2012 team made it to the class A quarter-finals before losing to Rockford, 56-51 ([Source](#)).

The following article, authored by Brian Calloway of the *Lansing State Journal*, provides an overview of Dan's career in sports.

### **Successful Okemos coach Dan Stolz headed to HOF**

Dan Stolz has a passion for basketball.

Stolz excelled on the hardwood during his playing career at Okemos and Alma College and then later as a coach.

But his impact has gone far beyond basketball.

Stolz was a state championship coach in multiple sports and will be honored for his achievements this month when he is inducted into the Greater Lansing Sports Hall of Fame.

Stolz will be the latest member of his family inducted into the hall of fame, joining father, Stanley, and uncle, Denny Stolz. Both were involved in coaching and Stolz followed in their footsteps and made a big mark.

"I knew what the whole teaching and coaching thing was about because of my father," Stolz said. "He was obviously my role model and I liked that lifestyle. I thought this would be a blast coaching kids and taking the kids in your own community and trying to run camps and develop what you have and do the best you can. And you'd have some stability because you could be in a community."

Stolz had plenty of success in the profession following a successful playing career where he was an all-state basketball and baseball performer at Okemos and was the MIAA co-MVP in basketball in 1978 at Alma.

Stolz was involved with several sports in his coaching career, spending time leading basketball, softball, tennis and boys and girls golf teams. And he found success in each sport.

"I guess I've always been kind of an athletics junkie," Stolz said. "I just love to play lots of different things. It was almost like whatever season it was, was my favorite season. Basketball is really truly my passion. I loved playing baseball, I love to golf. It got to a point where there's a lot of different sports I spent some time on and I wanted to learn to coach and teach it and get better at it as an athlete, like tennis and badminton. There's a lot of different things and I'm still learning." ([Source](#))

On May 17, 2012, as Audrey Dahlgren ([Source](#)) reported in "Long-Time Okemos Basketball Coach Retires," Dan decided to step down as head coach of the OHS boys' basketball team,":

The legacy of the Stolz coaching era at Okemos High School has ended.

Okemos boys' basketball coach Dan Stolz decided to step down as the boys' varsity basketball coach after twenty-three years of coaching. Eighteen of which were at Okemos.

Stan Stolz, Dan's father, began coaching at Okemos in 1968. Stolz played under his father in high school and won a state championship under his Dad as an assistant coach before taking over the program in 1994.

During his time as Chieftain head coach, he won 16 league championships, 11 district titles, and two regional crowns. He was also named the AP's Class A state coach of the year in 2006.

Stolz ends with an overall 428-99 coaching record and a 338-78 record at Okemos.

Stolz will still continue to coach the Okemos boys' varsity golf team. ([Source](#))

In 2013, Dan Stolz was inducted into the [Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan](#) (see bio below).

## **2013 HALL-of-FAME INDUCTEE**

# **Dan Stolz**

## **Okemos High School**



In twenty-three years as head varsity basketball coach at Okemos and Williamston High Schools, Dan Stolz won 428 games with only 99 losses. His teams won a remarkable 16 league championships during that span. His teams also captured 12 district championships and 2 regional titles. In 2006, he coached his team all the way to the MHSAA Finals, before enduring a heartbreaking loss in the final seconds.

Dan has been a BCAM Regional Director for Region 8 and currently is the Chairperson for the annual BCAM Coaches vs. Cancer Golf Outing.

Dan has won numerous Coach of the Year awards including: AP Class C in 1983, BCAM Regional (1998, 2001, 2003 and 2009), BCAM Class A and Overall Coach of the Year in 2006. He also was honored by the MHSCA in 2006.

Dan makes his home in Okemos with his wife Debbie of 27 years. He has one son Scott, 24, and a daughter Emily, 23, who he is proud to say were his former ball boy and ball girl in their younger years.

In 2015, Dan was inducted into the inaugural class of the **Okemos High School Athletic Hall of Fame** with the following citation.

**Dan Stolz** – Current boys and girls golf coach; former coach of multiple sports at OHS; won state titles as head coach of girls tennis ('93) and softball ('99); coach of state runner-up teams in boys basketball ('06) and girls golf ('13); All-State basketball student-athlete at OHS ('75)

In 2017, Dan was inducted into [The Greater Lansing Area Sports Hall of Fame](#), the web site for which provides the following summary of Dan Stolz's athletic/coaching career.

## Dan Stolz – 2017

☆ Inducted: 2017

### Okemos High School – Baseball and Basketball

3 Varsity Letter in Basketball

All-League 1974 and 1975

All State in 1974 and 1975

4 Varsity Letters in Baseball

All League 1973, 1974, 1975

### Alma College – Basketball

All League 1977, 1978, 1979

MVP in MIAA 1978

Inducted into Alma HOF 1996

### Basketball Coaching, Williamston HS

Record 90 – 21

3 League Titles

Class C Coach of the Year 1983



#### **Basketball Coaching, Okemos HS**

Career Record 338 – 78

League Titles 16, District Titles 12, Regional Titles 2, Regional Coach of the Year 4 times

Class A Coach of the Year 2006

#### **Softball Coaching Career**

Career Record 485 and 109

State Class A Champions 1999, Coach of the Year 1999

#### **Girls Tennis**

League 10 Titles, Regional Titles 8, State Champions 1993

Class A Coach of the Year 1993

#### **Boys Golf**

CAAC Blue Champions 2010

#### **Girls Golf**

CAAC Blue Champions 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016

Regional Coach of the Year 2010

On September 15, 2019, Dan was inducted into the Michigan High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame (see bio below).

## ***DAN STOLZ, OKEMOS***



### **2019 Hall of Fame Inductee**

Don Stolz began his career at Williamston High School coaching varsity basketball from 1982-1986 where his record was 90-21, and included league championships (3x) and district championships (2x). From there he moved to Okemos High School where he has remained, coaching varsity girls softball, varsity girls tennis, varsity boys basketball, and varsity girls and boys golf. As coach of the varsity girls softball team for nineteen years his overall record was 485-109, including league championships (16x), regional championships (3x) and in 1999 a State Title. As coach of the varsity girls tennis team for ten years, his teams won league championships (10x), regional championships (8x), were state runners-up (3x) and won the State Title in 1993. In 1995 Don took over as the varsity boys basketball coach. During his eighteen years as head coach his overall record was 338-78, including league championships (13x), district championships (10x), regional championships (2x) and a state final. Don served as varsity boys golf coach from 2009-2016 earning a league championship. He has been the varsity girls golf coach since 2009 and continues to coach. To date his teams have won league championships (8x), regional championships (3x), were state runners-up in 2013 and have six top ten finishes.

Don has received a number of honors and recognitions for his coaching abilities. He was named Coach of the Year for softball (1999), Girls Tennis Class A Coach of the Year (1993), Girls Tennis MHSCA Coach of the Year (1993), LSJ Girls Golf Coach of the Year (2013), MIGCA Girls Golf Regional Coach of the Year (2013), MITGA Boy Golf District Coach of the Year (2013). As varsity boys basketball coach he was also named AP Class C Coach of the Year, three time LSJ Coach of the Year, four time BCAM Regional Coach of the Year, MHSCA Coach of the Year, BCAM Class A Coach of the Year and BCAM Overall Coach of the Year. Don was inducted into the BCAM Hall of Fame in 2013, the Okemos Athletics Hall of Fame in 2015 and the Greater Lansing Hall of Fame in 2017.



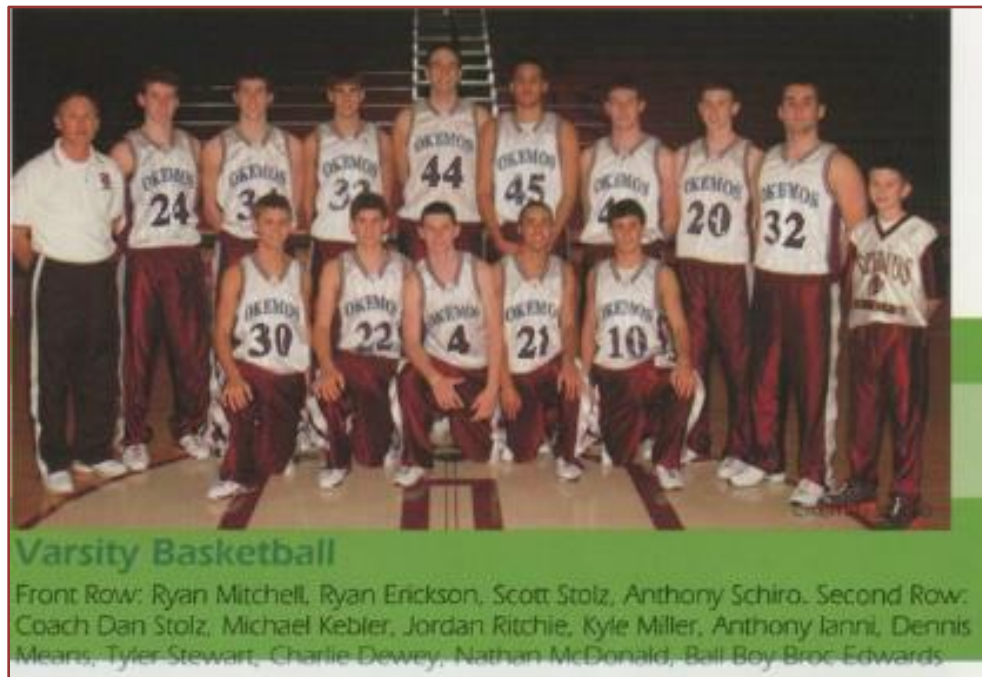
### Scott Stolz

The third generation of The Stolz Boys is represented by the fourth of The Stolz Boys, **Scott Stolz** (OHS Class of 2007), son of Dan Stolz, grandson of Stan Stolz, and great nephew of Denny Stolz.



**Scott Stolz** (Source: 2007 *Tomahawk* Yearbook Senior Photo)

Scott played for his father his senior year (2006-2007) on the varsity squad (#4 in the team photo below & Dan Stolz at far left in the second row).



(Source: p. 85 Okemos High School 2007 *Tomahawk* Yearbook)

During Scott's junior year (2005-2006), the Okemos Chieftains had one of their most memorable seasons as described in the excerpt below from the Okemos High School 2006 *Tomahawk* yearbook.

## Chieftains redefine the word "victory"

Rarely has there been a team that has sparked so much triumph, love, and personal pride in the hearts of Okemos citizens and students. The Boys' Varsity Basketball season wrote history by being the first team at OHS to make it to the State Championships in the Class A Division. Through sheer determination and talent, the Chiefs pushed a championship rumble to double overtime and created what the Lansing State Journal has called "one of the greatest championship games in Michigan prep basketball finals history." Despite losing on an arguable technicality, this season was by no means a disappointment. "I couldn't be more proud," said Senior Super-fan **Jeff Beck**. "I felt like I was part of the team this year; with the wins and losses I was right there with them." Led by Senior All-State **Johnathon "J-Train" Jones**, the Chieftains finished with a 25-2 season, still the best record in the state of Michigan. Besides making it to the state finals, highlights of the season include beating Holt at Regionals (ending their season), making it to the Breslin, **Coach Stolz** winning Coach of the Year and having a jam-packed student section, home or away. "The fans acted as a sixth man on the court," Senior **Bobby "Milkshake" Albers** said. **Mike "Let it Rain" Emerson** agreed that "every game felt like a home game because of the crowd."

OHS fans went to such extents as waiting for tickets to the State game at four thirty in the morning while snowing - even though the tickets didn't go on sale until nine - but that's just the way the community backed the team. Senior **Erin Hysell**, girlfriend of **Ivan "Superivan" Parker**, said it best: "I might have looked like a crazy fool at games yelling at players and refs, but OHS basketball can do that to you. Something got into me - into everyone - at those games. I love OHS Basketball." According to Junior **Anthony "What you talkin" Ianni**, the season was a "magical ride that nobody will ever forget." We may not have a state championship, but at the end of the day, this season of Boys' Varsity Basketball has created a legacy of class, victory and unity that has left an indelible mark in the memories of many. Stolz for President.

## Coaching Legacy of Stan and Dan Stolz at Okemos High

One “stat” not reported—or at least not given enough emphasis—by the media and/or web sites in reports on the first two generations of **The Stolz Boys** are the numbers of boys that Stan and Dan Stolz coached/mentored at Okemos High who then went on to play basketball at various colleges and universities. Indeed, these two—Stan and Dan—coached numerous **Chieftain** boys who went on to play basketball at various colleges and universities

Of particular note, however, eight of those young men coached by either Stan or Dan Stolz went on to play basketball as **Michigan State University Spartans**:

- Robert “Joe” Shackleton (OHS '71)
- Greg Lott ('74)
- Bob Fossum ('80)
- Greg Vanek ('81)
- Kris Weshinskey (freshman '86-'87 and JV '87-'88 but graduated from a Virginia high school in '90)
- Mike Kebler (2007)
- Anthony Ianni (2007)
- Dan Chapman (2010).

Of these eight **Chieftains**, in his senior year under Coach Stan Stolz, Greg Vanek helped **Okemos High School** to win the 1981 Michigan Class “B” State Championship.

A quarter century later, when Mike Kebler and Anthony Ianni were in their senior year under coach Dan Stolz, the **Okemos Chieftains** came up just a basket short of winning the 2006 Michigan Class “A” State Championship.

In summary, while Denny Stolz did not have a direct connection to athletics at Okemos High School, Denny’s role model as a coach undoubtedly served as a positive influence on brother Stan and nephew Dan, with a Stolz coaching **Chieftains’** varsity basketball for 44 consecutive years—and both Stan and Dan garnering hall of fame careers, with the youngest Stolz, Scott, also playing for his father Dan and becoming the second of **The Stolz Boys** to graduate from **Okemos High School**. Today, the legacy forged by The Stolz Boys continuing to be carried on under **Jeff Wonch**, who succeeded Dan as head coach of **Okemos High Chieftains** boys’ basketball.

More indepth coverage of the basketball careers of the eight **Chieftains** coached by Stan or Dan Stolz is presented in [“The Chieftain Fourteen”](#) (click one link)

[From Okemos High’s O-ZONE to Michigan State’s IZZONE: The Red Cedar Journeys of “The Chieftain Fourteen”](#) (by Kerry J. Byrnes, OHS Class of '63)