

2015 SRAM Coach of the Year Award

The SRAM Coach of the Year Award acknowledges a head coach whose qualities as a leader and motivator embodies NICA's mission to provide student-athletes with the coaching and camaraderie to help them achieve both competitive and non-competitive goals in a safe and enjoyable manner.

Mark LaPaglia, Buena High School, Arizona Interscholastic Cycling School Mountain Bike League



Mark has been described as a dedicated and inspirational coach whose character cannot be summarized adequately in words. Parents and student-athletes alike respect Mark because he holds his riders to much higher standards than just racing and results. While he led his team to the 2015 Arizona State Championship title, he focused on having one-on-ones with each of his riders, expecting and supporting their academic progress, and holding his student-athletes to a higher GPA than other high school sports. He's known as a leader who loves his student-athletes as if they were his own children, and several nominations for his award referenced the team's camaraderie and identity as a family. Buena's student-athletes travel and camp as a team, and are led by Mark to believe that every person on the team matters — even family members who are ringing their cowbells on the sidelines. Team members are also contributing members of their community

— participating in local cycling events to promote the sport and providing trail maintenance to improve local trails. In the words of one of his student-athletes, "He is an inspiration and has a manner of reaching kids that brings out the very best in all of us." And from a parent..."Under Mark's tutelage these students are becoming better people, not just better athletes!"



"Partnering with the Arizona league and with NICA means participating with like-minded individuals who are determined to see positive transformations in the lives of students. I believe in the mission of developing strong bodies, strong minds and strong character through efforts on a bike. I believe it is my responsibility to help students to see their potential and then live up to it...I see tremendous opportunity to make a difference."