Ave Maria Announces Hall of Fame Class of 2026

Campus Update

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Ave Maria University is pleased to announce the 2026 Class of the Ave Maria University Athletics Hall of Fame. The athletic department honored the inductees at a banquet and induction ceremony on Friday night, October 23, during the University's homecoming festivities.

This is the fifth class of inductees, with 13 athletes currently inducted into the Hall of Fame.

The class was selected by the University's Hall of Fame committee, which consists of members of the University administration, members of the athletic department's executive team, and members of the University's sports information department. One Ballot — with three votes — was also cast by Ave Maria fans, as the total of the more than 500 unique ballots cast were factored into the decision.

The John Paul II Distinguished Alumni Award, which will be announced in the coming weeks, recognizes an AMU athletic alum who has achieved notable distinction off the field of competition following graduation.

Mary Mason becomes the second Cross Country runner to join the Ave Maria Athletics Hall of Fame and for good reason. Mason was a four-time NAIA National Championship Qualifier from 2018-2021. She was just the second ever female Gyrene to qualify for the National Championship and the first to do so since 2010. Mason was also a four-time First Team All-Sun Conference runner, the 2020 Sun Conference Champion of Character, and was a five-time Sun Conference Runner of the Week. Internally at Ave Maria, Mason was the AMU Female Newcomer of the Year in 2019, the AMU Female Gyrene of the Year in 2021 and the Female Senior of the Year in 2022.

Eric Klekas only played his senior year and fifth year in the Green and Navy, but that was all he needed to write is name in the record books at Ave Maria. In the 2021-22 season, Klekas was named an NAIA All-American Honorable Mention, becoming the third Gyrene in Men's Basketball history to earn recognition from the national office. That season, Klekas was also named to the Sun Conference All-Tournament team, a tournament that Gyrenes made the championship game for the second time in program history. Klekas was also a two-time First Team All-Sun Conference nominee and a four-time Sun Conference Player of the Week. Internally, Klekas was the AMU Male Athlete of the Year in 2021 and the Male Gyrene of the Year in 2022.

Florida native Kalie Raeckers becomes the third softball player to join the Ave Maria Athletics Hall of Fame, tying football for the most players in the Hall of Fame. Raeckers was unstoppable on the base paths in 2021, swiping 54 bags. Raeckers led the NAIA in stolen bases that season and won the NAIA Golden Shoe Award. Raeckers was also a three-time First Team All-Sun Conference nominee in 2018, 2019 and 2021. In those same years was named to the NFCA All-Region Second Team. Raeckers was also a four-time Sun Conference Player of the Week. Internally, Raeckers was the AMU Female Athlete of the Year in 2018 and 2020 and was AMU Female Senior of the Year in 2021. Raeckers still leads the program in career games played, at-bats, runs scored and stolen bases.

The three honorees, along with the John Paul II Distinguished Alumni Award, will be recognized as Ave Maria's Hall of Fame Class of 2026 as part of the Homecoming Weekend festivities on campus.

Read online for photos and videos:

https://alumni.avemaria.edu/news/ave-maria-announces-hall-of-fame-class-of-2026