

15th Annual Jet Award Gala and After-Party

Jet Award Gala information complete with winners of the Jet Award, Legacy Award, Mr. Football and Jordan Larson Awards, sponsors and event details.

OMAHA, NE, UNITED STATES, February 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- 15th Annual Jet Award Gala & After Party Set for April 2 at Steelhouse Omaha Presented by [Corwin Toyota of Bellevue](#)

[The Jet Award Foundation](#) will host the 15th Annual Jet Award Gala and After Party, presented by Corwin Toyota of Bellevue, on Thursday, April 2, 2026, at Steelhouse Omaha. Senator Pete Ricketts will serve as the Honorary Chair for the 2026 Jet Award Gala. The milestone evening will celebrate excellence in athletics, leadership, and community impact while honoring standout college and high school athletes, as well as influential mentors in education.

“

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Johnny Rodgers

and consistency have set a new standard for excellence at the position.



The evening begins with a VIP Cocktail Reception from 5:00–6:00 p.m., followed by the Gala Program at 6:30 p.m., and concludes with the Jet Award After Party. The event will also feature Keynote Speaker Matt Davison, former Nebraska football standout and respected leader in collegiate athletics.

Headlining the event is the recognition of 2025 Jet Award Winner Kaden Wetjen of the University of Iowa. Wetjen made history as the first two-time recipient of the Jet Award, which honors the nation’s most outstanding return specialist in college football. His explosive performances

“Kaden Wetjen represents everything this award stands for,” said Johnny Rodgers, Heisman Trophy winner and namesake of the Jet Award. “He’s electric with the ball in his hands, fearless in big moments, and he changes games. To win this award twice says a lot about his talent, his work ethic, and his impact on the game.”

The 2026 Jet Award Legacy Award will be presented to Tim Dwight, former University of Iowa star and one of the most electrifying returners in Big Ten history. Dwight finished his Hawkeye career as Iowa’s all-time leader in punt return yards (1,102) and punt return touchdowns (5), while also setting school records for career receiving touchdowns (21) and receiving yards (2,271). In recognition of their lasting impact on college football, the Big Ten Returner of the Year Award is named in honor of Johnny Rodgers and Tim Dwight.

The Gala will also recognize Nebraska’s top high school athletes and outstanding leaders in education.

The 3rd Annual Mister Football Award, sponsored by Acura of Omaha and Superior Honda of Omaha, will be presented to Jett Thomalla, quarterback at Millard South High School. Thomalla completed his high school career as Nebraska’s all-time leader in passing yards (10,253) and passing touchdowns (134). A five-star Alabama recruit and two-time state champion, he set single-season state records as a senior with 3,484 passing yards and 61 touchdowns.

The 2nd Annual Jordan Larson Most Outstanding High School Female Athlete of the Year Award, sponsored by Doctor Fit & Fabulous Jaime Seeman, will be awarded to Sonora DeFini of Gretna East High School. DeFini earned back-to-back Nebraska Gatorade Player of the Year honors in 2024 and 2025, competed on teams that went 84-1, and helped secure four state championships during her high school career. She set the state single-season scoring record with 55 goals and 11 assists as a junior and capped her career with 44 goals and 10 assists as a senior. Dr. Seeman is a board-certified OB-GYN and a leading advocate for health and fitness in the



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In addition, the Jet Award Foundation will present the 2026 Michael B. Yanney Mentor of the Year Award to Scott Strohmeier, head coach at Iowa Western Community College, recognizing his outstanding leadership, mentorship, and lasting impact on student-athletes both on and off the field. The Mentor of the Year Award is proudly sponsored by North End Teleservices. Located in Northeast Omaha, Nebraska, North End Teleservices, LLC is a contact center privately owned and operated by Carmen Tapio. It is the coming together of her passion for our industry and the community.

The 15th Annual Jet Award Gala is dedicated to the memory of Michael B Yanney a grandson of Lebanese immigrants who settled in a late-19th-century Nebraska sod house and himself became a statewide business and civic leader with extensive international ties. Without Mister Yanney's help and guidance the Jet Award Foundation and the scholarship program would not have been possible.

Proceeds from the Jet Award Gala support the Johnny Rodgers Career and Technical Scholarship, benefiting students at Metropolitan Community College and Iowa Western Community College. The scholarship assists students with demonstrated financial need—many of whom are first-generation college students—pursuing trade and career education that strengthens the regional workforce.

Tables, sponsorships, and tickets are available for the 15th Annual Jet Award Gala and After Party at TheJetAward.com.

About the Jet Award Foundation

The Jet Award Foundation honors excellence in college football while supporting education and workforce development through scholarships and community initiatives.

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The Jet Award Foundation

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