

# Lansing State Journal

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## HIGH SCHOOL

# DeWitt's Rob Zimmerman named state's high school football coach of year by Detroit Lions

**Brian Calloway** Lansing State Journal

Published 4:36 p.m. ET Jan. 29, 2021 | Updated 8:58 p.m. ET Jan. 29, 2021

Rob Zimmerman was meeting to select state championship rings this week when he was pulled aside by his administration and asked to head to a different room.

Upon his arrival, the DeWitt football coach saw a computer screen that included new Detroit Lions coach Dan Campbell on the other end.

Campbell helped deliver the news that became public Friday with Zimmerman being announced as the Detroit Lions high school football coach of the year in the state.

Zimmerman is the second straight coach from Greater Lansing to win the award with Lansing Catholic's Jim Ahern being the 2019 recipient.

"It's obviously a huge award," Zimmerman said. "I still look at it as an award for our program and for our coaching staff. I say this all the time and I truly believe it. I have the best coaching staff in the state. There's so many people that have contributed so much time to get our program where it's at. It's really a reflection of our entire program and I'm just fortunate to be the head coach."

Zimmerman earned the award after guiding DeWitt to a 12-0 season that included a Division 3 state title. DeWitt captured that title - the first in program history - with a 40-30 victory over reigning state champion River Rouge at Ford Field on Saturday.

The state championship and the award from the Lions have made for an exciting week for Zimmerman and his DeWitt program.

"It's been a busy week in a great way because it's all due to us winning the state championship," Zimmerman said. "Ultimately the neatest thing by far is just seeing the boys and how excited they are still about winning that. I'm still just so happy for them. All the

extra stuff is really nice, but ultimately them winning a state championship and being rewarded for working so, so hard is by far the greatest thing of all of it."

Zimmerman also enjoyed having his family, especially his father, be a part of the moment at Ford Field.

As part of Zimmerman winning the award, a \$3,000 donation will be made to the DeWitt football program. Zimmerman will also be honored as the Detroit Lions nominee for the Don Shula NFL high school football coach of the year.

This season marked the 25th as a head coach for Zimmerman, who has a 222-45 mark. The 2016 Michigan High School Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame inductee led a DeWitt squad that outscored its opposition 496-80 on its way to a state title.

DeWitt, which has won 15 straight league titles and won 14 district titles, 12 regional titles and four state runner-up finishes under Zimmerman, beat three teams that finished in the top five of the final Associated Press rankings during its title run. Top-ranked DeWitt beat No. 5 Mason in the district final, No. 2 Muskegon in the state semifinal and No. 4 River Rouge in the final.

"It was huge (to get a title for coach)," DeWitt quarterback Tyler Holtz said following the state title win. "Obviously Coach Zimm wanted to win one, and we wanted to be the first."

**More:** Finally champs: DeWitt football gets past River Rouge for first state title

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