



National Congress of State Games Selects Missouri Runner and Wisconsin High Jumper as 2006 Athletes of the Year

(Colorado Springs, Oct.14)---The National Congress of State Games has selected **Katie Sutton** (Kirkwood, MO) and **Bill Wambach** (Sun Prairie, WI) as its 2006 Female and Male Athletes of the Year from a talented field of athletes nominated from across the nation.

The awards were announced during the National Congress of State Games annual Athlete of the Year banquet in Colorado Springs as part of the organization's national symposium hosted by the Colorado Springs Sports Corporation.



Sutton, 26, won the gold medal in the 5K Road Race at the Show-Me State Games this summer, finishing first overall (18.08) in the coed field of 68 runners. It's the first time in the event that a woman has earned that distinction. She holds a total of six Show-Me State Games running records while competing in the event since 1993 in track & field, triathlon, and basketball.

The Missouri athlete won the St.Louis Half-Marathon and the St.Louis Track Club Half-Marathon this year in addition to her standout performance at the Show-Me State Games.

Sutton has won gold medals in the 5K Road Race and 1500 and 3000 meters at the state games, and bronze medals in the triathlon since beginning her competition at the age of 13 in the basketball event.



Wambach, 86, has chalked up an equally-impressive record in the Badger State Games, winning a total of 11 medals (6 gold) in track and field events since 2002.

The ex-Marquette University athlete, a retired state highway engineer, holds the USA Track & Field age group record for the high jump with his 1950s-style Western roll method. He sailed over the bar at 1.26 meters this summer for his record.

He celebrated his record-setting effort with a Scotch Manhattan at his senior housing center residence in Sun Prairie.

He's won Badger State Games medals in the high jump, long jump, triple jump and 100 meters over the span of his career and begins his training each year in March at Sun Prairie High School.

"These special athletes spotlight what our state games represent to more than 500,000 competitors each year," said Kevin Cummings, President of the National Congress of State Games and Executive Director of the Bay State (Mass.) Games.

"Both of them continue to compete in the games because they love sport, cherish fitness and healthy lifestyles, and benefit from the spirit of competition so unique to our events."

The selections were made from a field of nominations by each of the 37 state summer games and 14 state winter games across the nation. The NCSG Athlete of the Year Committee is chaired by Kyle Case, Director of the Utah Summer Games.

"This was a rigorous process with a great field of nominations," said Case. "The stories of the nominees and their achievements would fill entire sports sections of most major daily newspapers, and inspire millions of Americans."

The National Congress of State Games (NCSG) is a membership organization comprised of 37 Summer State Games and 14 Winter State Games organizations and a community-based member of the United States Olympic Committee. The NCSG is also the rights holder of the State Games of America, an Olympic-style event featuring competition between State Games medal winners (gold, silver, bronze) from across the nation.

Forty states are conducting or organizing statewide sports festivals known as State Games. Modeled after the Olympic Games, State Games provide a motivational goal for all athletes within the state in which they are organized. Nationwide more than 90 sports are offered each year in State Games with competitions held in 536 communities for participants from over 6,000 cities and towns. Competitions are both recreational and competitive and have been the first step for many Olympic and professional athletes.

The NCSG is committed to the development of sports, the promotion of grassroots competition and the lifelong success of athletes nationwide. The NCSG exists to facilitate the organization and promotion of Olympic-style competitions open to athletes of all ages and abilities in every state across the country.

In addition to sports-related activities, the NCSG and its state member associations have made a commitment to provide educational opportunities and programs for the benefit of participants nationwide, including scholarship programs, sportsmanship initiatives, health and fitness offerings, youth leadership forums, and anti-tobacco/smoking programs.

Each year nearly 500,000 athletes of all ages, backgrounds and skill levels take part in State Games competitions nationwide. An additional 1.2 million spectators attend State Games events made possible by the work of thousands of coaches, parents, officials, sponsors and more than 100,000 volunteers.

THE 2007 NATIONAL SHOWDOWN



The State Games of America (SGA) is the premier, national multi-sport event for athletes of all ages and abilities held every biennium. Medal winners from 51 State Games earn the right to compete against other winners and match their skills and competitive desire in a national arena.

A property of the [National Congress of State Games](#), the 2007 SGA will be organized and managed by the [Colorado Springs Sports Corporation](#). The 2007 State Games of America will be combined with Colorado's Rocky Mountain State Games and will be held August 2-5 in Colorado Springs at venues including the U.S. Olympic Training Center, United State Air Force Academy, The Colorado College, Fort Carson, and the Colorado Springs World Arena, site of the opening ceremonies.

Over 9,400 athletes from 46 states participated in the 2005 SGA in Colorado Springs and 10,000 athletes are expected to participate in 2007. Competition will be offered in multiple sports with a list of sports announced in January 2007.

In order to qualify for the State Games of America, participants must have won a gold, silver or bronze medal in a SGA sport in their local State Games in a qualifying year (2005 or 2006 Summer, 2006 or 2007 Winter), won a medal in the 2005 State Games of America or be residents of Colorado for at least 30 days prior to competition. College students, U.S. military personnel and their families who are stationed in Colorado, are also eligible to participate.

The State Games concept was developed in New York in 1978 with the Empire State Games. In 2006, more than 500,000 athletes competed in State Games nationwide. State Games feature various sports of the Olympic and Pan American Games as well as sports that have regional popularity within each state.

[Prominent State Games alumni](#) include Olympians Jeff Blatnick, Ralph Boston, Tracy Caulkins, Calbert Cheaney, Curt Clausen, Diane Dixon, Tom Dolan, Suzy Favor-Hamilton, Dan Gable, Rowdy Gaines, Harvey Glance, Nicole Haslett, Nancy Hogshead, Roy Jones, Adonis Jordan, Nancy Kerrigan, Rusty LaRue, Danny Manning, Henry Marsh, Eric Montross, Chris Mullin, Tab Ramos, Glenn Robinson, Alberto Salazar, Doug Smith, Rex Walters, Lones Wigger, Jr. and Paul Wylie.