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Palm Beach County Sports Hall of Fame Announces Annual Sports Award Finalists

WEST PALM BEACH, FL – The Palm Beach County Sports Commission (PBCSC) announces 14 finalists for the 2011 Annual Sports Awards. The Annual Sports Awards include Amateur Athlete of the Year, Coach of the Year, High School Athlete of the Year, High School Coach of the Year, Professional Athlete of the Year and Outstanding Sports Contributor of the Year. The recipients of the Annual Sports Awards will be recognized at the 2012 Palm Beach County Sports Hall of Fame Banquet, presented by Lytal, Reiter, Smith, Ivey & Fronrath, held at the Palm Beach County Convention Center on Sunday, March 25 beginning at 5:30pm.

Finalists for the 2011 Annual Sports Awards are:

Amateur Athlete of the Year

Susan Hirsch Cohn, Golf
Susan won her 8th Palm Beach County Women’s Amateur Golf Championship in 2011. She has been crowned Amateur Champion 8 different times since 2000, which is a tournament record. In her victory, Susan topped the field with a three-day total of 217, a plus 1 total for the tournament, and took the honor with a three-stroke lead.

Alfred Morris, Florida Atlantic University, Football
In his senior season at Florida Atlantic University, Alfred rushed for 1,186 yards and 9 touchdowns. He was named to the All-Sun Belt Conference second team for his outstanding running back performances. Capping off his senior season, Morris was crowned the All-Time leading rusher in FAU history. In an Owls win against UAB, Morris ran for 198 yards on 38 carries and 4 TD's. Alfred was also selected to play in the 87th Annual East-West Shrine Game.

Nicholas Israel-Stahre, Powerlifting
Nicholas made a huge impression with powerlifting in 2011, setting 10 different records and winning 16 different events. His records and victories were through USA Powerlifting, International Powerlifting, and Collegiate meets. Arguably, the most impressive is the USA Team Selection for the 2011 International Powerlifting Federation North American Bench Press Championships. When he is not competing, Nicholas speaks to groups of high school and collegiate lifters against the use of performance-and-strength-enhancing drugs.
High School Coach of the Year

Jack Daniels, William T. Dwyer HS, Football
Daniels is a three time recipient of the Lou Groza Coach of the Year Award, most recently in 2010. Jack Daniels has a 15-year career at William T. Dwyer, with a record of 127 wins and 37 losses. In 2011, Daniels led his Panthers to the Class 7A State Semi-Finals, and finished his season with a 12-2 record.

Randy Jackson, Palm Beach Gardens High School, Softball
Jackson, no stranger to this honor, led his Palm Beach Gardens Gators to the Class 6A State Title in 2011. His Gators won back to back State Champions in 2010 and 2011, after back to back Champions in 2005 and 2006. Over the past 7 years, Jackson has taken home the State Title 4 different times. Coach Randy Jackson was also named Miracle Sports Coach of the Year in Class 6A. Jackson completed his season with 20-5 record.

Doug Socha, American Heritage, Football
Socha in his second year as head football coach and athletic director for American Heritage coached his Stallions to the County’s only football State Championship in the Class 3A Title game. His team easily defeated Madison County in a 30-3 victory. Socha’s Stallions finished the season with a record of 12-1.

High School Athlete of the Year

William Likely, Glades Central High School, Football
Likely, a versatile junior plays on both sides of the ball and special teams. In 2011, he produced 1,175 total yards, scored 20 touchdowns and recorded 5 interceptions. Glades Central finished with a 12-1 record, losing in the Class 5A Regional Finals. In 2011, Likely was named the Lou Groza Palm Beach County High School Player of the Year and the Gatorade Florida Player of the Year. Off the field, Likely carries a 3.8 GPA.

Stephanie Schappert, Pope John Paul II High School, Track
Schappert was named Palm Beach County Female Athlete of the Year for two consecutive years, after winning the Class 2A State Championship in 800 meters and 1,600 meters. Stephanie holds the Pope John Paul II school record for the 1,600 meter race, with a time of 4 minutes and 51 seconds. Stephanie was named her school’s first Female Scholar Athlete of the Year, as well as being invited to the 1st Nike Elite Camp.

Kelvin Taylor, Glades Day School, Football
Taylor, a junior, made history on November 11, 2011, when he rushed for 388 yards and scored 6 touchdowns. His performance broke NFL Hall of Famer, Emmitt Smith’s 25-year old mark of 8,804 total rushing yards. Taylor had 2,884 yards and 40 touchdowns his junior year, which led him to break another state of Florida record. Kelvin is now the record holder for most touchdowns in a career with 144.

Coach of the Year

George “Butch” Estes, Palm Beach State, Men’s Basketball
Estes, a first year coach at Palm Beach State made quite the impression at Palm Beach State during his inaugural season. At one of the top two-year colleges in the country, he compiled a record of 25-5. He wrapped up his year being ranked third in the NJCAA Poll.

Mike Jarvis, Florida Atlantic University, Men’s Basketball
Jarvis’ Owls won the Sun Belt Conference regular season and finished 20-9 overall, completing his first 20-win season since moving to Division 1 in 1993. He was also named Conference Coach of the Year, after a 13-3 Sun Belt record.
Dan Schlager, Jupiter Mustangs, Pop Warner Football
Schlager lead the Jupiter Mustangs to the 2011 Pop Warner Midget Nationals Championship, beating the Far West Jets in the Finals. The team from New York was riding a 39 game unbeaten streak and was 2-time defending National Champions.

Professional Athlete of the Year
Keegan Bradley, Jupiter, PGA Tour Golfer
Since becoming a resident of Jupiter in 2011, Bradley has won twice on the PGA Tour. One of those victories included the PGA Championship in August at Atlanta Athletic Club. Bradley is the Tour’s Rookie of the Year for 2011, and he finished 13th on the money list with $3,758,600 in 28 starts. Keegan took home the hardware for the HP Byron Nelson Championship in May and teamed with Brendan Steele to win the Shark Shootout in December.

Outstanding Sports Contributor of the Year
Florida Atlantic University
Florida Atlantic University (FAU) kicked-off the 2011 college football season at the new FAU Stadium this past October. 2011 marked the inaugural season for the new $70 million FAU Stadium in beautiful Boca Raton. This state-of-the-art stadium has a seating capacity of 30,000. The stadium features 6,000 premium seats, 24 luxury suites, 26 loge boxes, 1,000 premier club seats and 4,000 priority club seats. The opening of the new stadium is one of the most important days in FAU football history and will be a great venue host for future sporting events in Palm Beach County.

The Annual Sports Award recipients will be joining the elite class of 2012 Hall of Fame inductees at the 36th Annual Palm Beach County Sports Hall of Fame Banquet. The Hall of Fame class of 2012 includes coaching legend Rollie Massimino, NFL receiver Anquan Boldin, and SEC East Division Champions University of Georgia coach Mark Richt. Rounding out the field of ten are Kevin Butler, Jessie Hester, Willie Goldsmith, Sr., Eric Kresser, Cauley Patrick, Fred Ross and Jimmy Spencer.

Jason Pugh, of ESPN 760 and WPTV will serve as Master of Ceremonies for the evening. The PBCSC is honored to have Jason return for another year to host the 2012 Palm Beach County Sports Hall of Fame Banquet.

Tickets are available online at www.palmbeachsports.com or by calling the Palm Beach County Sports Commission at 561-233-3180.

Candidates for Annual Sports Awards are nominated by interested individuals, with the finalists selected by members of the Hall of Fame Committee and Hall of Fame inductees.

About the Palm Beach County Sports Commission
The Palm Beach County Sports Commission is a private, not-for-profit organization contracted by Palm Beach County to promote and market the county as a sports and sports tourism destination. The Commission brings sporting events and activities to the county, enhances economic impact, stimulates bed tax revenues (primarily in the off-season) and maximizes utilization of county facilities. The Commission offers a full range of event service support, corporate partnerships, sponsorships and a local membership program that supports its goals. Local, regional, national and international marketing efforts are ongoing by the Commission with sports organizations and event owners. The Commission also produces sports-related programs for the residents of Palm Beach County including the Palm Beach County Sports Hall of Fame, the Lou Groza Collegiate Place-Kicker Award and the Kids Fitness Festival of the Palm Beaches. For more information on the Palm Beach County Sports Commission go to www.palmbeachsports.com.

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