



Virginia Amateur Sports, INC

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www.CommonwealthGames.org

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Virginia Amateur Sports Announces 2023 Athletes of the Year & National Award Winner

Virginia Amateur Sports, Inc (VAS) organizers of the Virginia Commonwealth Games at Liberty University, annual athletes of the year have been selected: Madalynn Grant of North Dinwiddie was named Youth Athlete of the Year, and Walter Bass of Gladys the Adult Athlete of the Year. These athletes were selected from the nominees in their category and nominations are submitted online annually. The winners were nominated to represent Virginia in the running for National Congress of State Games (NCSG) Athletes of the Year and those winners were announced in early October. Virginia was honored for the 4th time in the last 6 years to have one of the national winners. Madalynn Grant was selected as the National Congress of State Games Youth Athlete of the Year and was recognized at the NCSG Annual Symposium and TEAMS Conference and Expo on Wednesday, October 4th in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Madalynn is 11 and earned multiple medals in the 2022 and 2023 Games, competing in Outdoor Track & Field – gold in the Long Jump and silver in the 100m dash in 2022; bronze in the 100m and 200m dashes in 2023. Per her nomination, “She has been competing and running since the age of 7. Madalynn had a hard season this year, suffering an injury and hasn’t been able to long jump, but keeps a positive attitude and has kept training and running and hopes to jump again soon. Many didn’t understand the emotional trials of her circumstances during her season, but she pushed through more than just injury - she never quit even while being homeless part of her outdoor season. She continues to train and participate. Running helps her get through each day. She loves participating in the State Games and her goal each year is to set a personal record - so far she has. She wants to continue to compete and help other kids who might be facing homelessness know there is hope and picking a sport you love can help you get through the good times and bad times. Some kids run for fun; Madalynn is running towards her future. She loves making new friends along the way. Madalynn’s skills are numerous and impressive, and she continues to amaze others with skills and traits like humility, honesty, and passion. Madalynn doesn’t believe she deserves an award since she had a rough year and she had more bad days than good, but her goal is to practice even harder, make good grades and continue to grow in life and in Track and Field. Madalynn’s ultimate goal is to continue to encourage her friends and teammates to be the best version of themselves and to continue to volunteer and help her local community. One day, Madalynn wants to serve as a missionary to reach out to more youth and to participate in the 2024 State Games of America.”

Walter is 84 and has competed in the Games for many years and has earned numerous medals in Track & Field. Per his nomination, “He fell in love with Track & Field in late his sixties. He invested in a throwing coach to help him get started and began competing in Masters events throughout many states. His love for the sport inspired him to be a sponsor of a local high school invitational track meet. He recently suffered a rotator cuff injury on both shoulders, as well as having knee surgery; but Walter never gave up on the sport he loved. He went on to win the USATF Nationals track meet in Kentucky and Greensboro this Summer even after doctors had given him no hope that he could compete again.”. Walter also has gotten his grandsons involved in the sport and the Commonwealth Games, and the family is often seen competing together on Main Games weekend.

Previous winners from the VA Commonwealth Games include: 2021- Youth Female - Olivia Goodwin – Swimming – Charlottesville, VA, 2020 – Adult Female – Ashlynn Moore – Track & Field – Roanoke, VA and 2017 – Youth Male – Daylin Toms – Wrestling – Cool Ridge, WV.

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About the Virginia Commonwealth Games at Liberty University: Modeled after the Olympics, the Virginia Commonwealth Games welcomes athletes regardless of age or skill level. The Games embody the values of participation, sportsmanship, and healthy living amongst residents of Virginia and surrounding eligible states. The rights holder for the event is **Virginia Amateur Sports (VAS)**. VAS has been organizing the event for 34 years and it is truly a grassroots effort that relies on the dedication of thousands of volunteers and support from local sponsors and organizations across the Commonwealth. VAS is a member of the National Congress of State Games.

About the National Congress of State Games: The National Congress of State Games (NCSG) is a membership organization comprised of over 25 Summer State Games and 10 Winter State Games organizations and a member of the United States Olympic Committee's Multi Sports Organizational Council. The mission of the NCSG is to support State Games member organizations in the promotion of health, fitness and character building through Olympic – style competitions and physical activities. 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.

For more information on the Games, including images for download, visit: www.CommonwealthGames.org/news
Member of the National Congress of State Games—learn more at www.stategames.org

