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**Contact:** Chip Hofler  
[chip@ncsports.org](mailto:chip@ncsports.org)

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**NATIONAL CONGRESS OF STATE GAMES ANNOUNCED  
2016 ATHLETES OF THE YEAR**

*Grand Rapids, Mich.*, October, 13, 2016 – Officials with the National Congress of State Games (NCSG) announced the 2016 Athletes of the Year. A youth female, youth male, adult female and adult male athlete are chosen as Athlete of the Year. Athletes are nominated after winning Athlete of the Year at their local State Games. Thirty State Games organizations awarded Athletes of the Year in 2016 and submitted their nominations for the national award.

**The 2016 Athletes are:**

- Youth Female: Colette and Elyse Levens – Multi-sport – Lake Orion, MI
- Adult Male: Don “Boomer” McCrea – Multi-sport – Portland OR
- Adult Female: Janet Brady – Track and Field – Canton, MI
- Youth Male: Sabastian Harsh – Wrestling – Scottsbluff, NE

The 2016 recipients were recognized at the NCSG Annual Symposium and TEAMS Conference and Expo on Tuesday, September 27, 2016 in Atlantic City, NJ.

Photos of the 2016 Athletes of the Year at the Award’s Ceremony are attached.

Colette Levens and Elyse Levens (Youth Female AOY), 13, are identical twins that won the Meijer State Games of Michigan Female Youth Athlete of the Year. In 2016, they competed in Water Skiing during the 2016 Meijer State Games of Michigan Summer Games receiving Silver and Gold medals. They have previously medaled in Synchronized Swimming at the Meijer State Games of Michigan and Open Water Swimming and Water Skiing at the State Games of America. Colette and Elyse both volunteer to assist coaches with young swimmers at their swim club and work to expand the sport of synchronized swimming by teaching interested swimmers. Colette and Elyse are honor roll students, Mensa members and have both competed in the HiQora High IQ World Championships Round 1 and 2.

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"We believe this award symbolizes all of the hard work and effort that we have put into our sports," said Elyse Levens. "We feel proud of each other that we can share such an honor," continued Colette Levens.

Don "Boomer" McCrea (Adult Male AOY), 76, competed in six Track and Field events and participated in Diving at the 2016 State Games of Oregon. McCrea took home two gold, three silver, and one bronze medal. He has been a participant for over 20 years and mentors younger athletes, especially those with autism and other learning disabilities. McCrea also competes nationally in Track and Field, earning over 20 All-American awards from USA Track and Field. He enjoys getting to discuss details and techniques with those looking for guidance.

"The State games of Oregon and Washington, Masters Swimming, Diving, and Track and Field really saved my life and gave me the opportunity to compete, have camaraderie with other athletes and kept me active. This is my Heisman trophy." said McCrea.

Janet Brady (Adult Female AOY), 58, competed in Track and Field at the Meijer State Games of Michigan. She has 13 gold medals in shot put, discus, javelin, and hammer throw in three years at the Meijer State Games of Michigan. Brady volunteers at a children's school, is a Cub Scout Leader, a Girl Scout Leader and a part of Red Hats (co-queen) that made dresses for Little Dress for Africa and scarves for veterans in Ann Arbor. She is also a member and activity participant of the Canton Historical Society and a Canton Senior Leisure Advisory committee member.

Sabastian Harsh (Youth Male AOY), 14, wrestled at the Cornhusker State Games, becoming the first wrestler at the Cornhusker State Games to earn six gold medals two years in a row. He also earned his sixth Iron Man award, given to wrestlers that earn 10 or more points in medals. In total Harsh has earned 29 gold, eight silver and one bronze in seven years as a competitor of the Cornhusker State Games. Harsh is also quarterback for his Freshman football team, active in his church and helps make meals for families in need.

The NCSG has awarded Athletes of the Year since 1994. This is the first year the NCSG has awarded both a Male and Female Youth athlete.

### **Previous Athlete of the Year award winners include:**

- **2015:** Youth: Danika Osman – Swimming - Missouri, Female: Andrea Weiss – Badminton – New Mexico, Male: Josh Majerus – Wrestling – Nebraska

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- **2014:** Youth: Branden Ivey – Martial Arts – Mississippi, Female: Jennifer Buckner– Weight Lifting – New Mexico, Male: Elmer Hawse – Shooting – Missouri
- **2013:** Youth: Taileena Oja – Swimming – Missouri, Female: Jen Reiter – Multi-sport – Montana, Male: Bryan Brosious – Multi-Sport - Montana
- **2012:** Youth: Sean Lee – Track and Field – California, Female: Danna Kelly – Triathlon – Iowa, Male: Carroll Marty – Iowa – Track and Field
- For complete list of previous winners please visit [www.stategames.org/aoy](http://www.stategames.org/aoy)

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**About the National Congress of State Games:** The National Congress of State Games (NCSG) is a membership organization comprised of 33 Summer State Games and 11 Winter State Games organizations and a member of the United States Olympic Committee's Multi Sport 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.

**About the Meijer State Games of Michigan:** The Meijer State Games of Michigan is located in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Meijer State Games of Michigan runs a Summer and Winter Games. In August 2017, the Meijer State Games of Michigan will play host to the 2017 State Games of America.

**About the State Games of Oregon:** The State Games of Oregon is located in Beaverton, Oregon. The State Games of Oregon is conducted by the Oregon Amateur Sports Foundation

**About the Cornhusker State Games:** The Cornhusker State Games is located in Lincoln, Nebraska. The Cornhusker State Games is conducted by the Nebraska Sports Council. The Nebraska Sports Council is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization with a mission of providing quality competition for amateur athletes of all ages and abilities and promoting healthy and active lifestyle choices.