



St. Louis Sports Commission NEWS RELEASE

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SOFTBALL PLAYERS WHO MADE NATIONAL HEADLINES CARRYING INJURED OPPONENT AROUND BASES TO BE HONORED AT SPORTSMANSHIP EVENT IN ST. LOUIS

10TH ANNUAL AT&T NATIONAL SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS WILL CELEBRATE ALL THAT'S RIGHT IN SPORTS

ST. LOUIS – May 7, 2008 – The softball duo responsible for an incredible act of sportsmanship that captured national media attention will be honored at the AT&T National Sportsmanship Awards in St. Louis on June 5. Central Washington University softball players **Mallory Holtman** and **Liz Wallace** will receive a special award from the Citizenship Through Sports Alliance and the St. Louis Sports Commission for an amazing selfless gesture that occurred in a game just days ago.

On April 26, Western Oregon University senior Sara Tucholsky hit her first-ever collegiate home run. Overjoyed, she missed first base, and as she turned back to tag it, her knee gave out. She had suffered a torn ACL. Tucholsky crawled back to first, but unable to touch all the bases, her only career home run was about to become a long single. In a remarkable display of sportsmanship, Holtman, Central Washington's first baseman and all-time home run hitter, stepped forward and asked if she could carry the injured opponent around the bases. She and Wallace gently lifted Tucholsky and carried her from base to base, allowing her to tap each base with her foot.

The inspiring story – which has been featured on the network morning shows, ESPN and in *The New York Times* – is one of several extraordinary acts that will be highlighted at the 10th annual AT&T National Sportsmanship Awards. Celebrating all that's right in sports, the event honors athletes and personalities from around the nation for their integrity, class, selflessness, kindness, community service, and overall commitment to sportsmanship. The awards program begins at 7 p.m. on Thursday, June 5 at the Chase Park Plaza in St. Louis. Tickets are available and may be purchased by calling 314-992-0686 or visiting www.nationalsportsmanshipawards.com. The event will also air as part of a 30-minute special on KSDK-TV (Channel 5) at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 10 and be rebroadcast at 11 a.m. on Sunday, June 22.

Taking place in St. Louis for the fourth straight year, the event will continue its tradition of recognizing individuals from each of St. Louis' major league teams for their class and community service. This year's honorees include Blues goalie **Manny Legace** and Rams linebacker **Chris Draft**. The event's live keynote interview will feature Major League Baseball Commissioner **Bud Selig**, who will be recognized with a lifetime achievement award for his role in the game's significant renaissance and charitable endeavors.

But the biggest stars of the night aren't necessarily the well-known names; rather the individuals who have the most heartwarming stories. Among them:

- **David Bittinger, Lucas Hasenfratz, Jake Kirk, Ethan Merivirta, and Matthew Taneyhill:** In the running for homecoming king at Lake Fenton High School in Linden, Mich., the five seniors decided to forego the opportunity to wear the crown. Instead, "The Lake Fenton Five" demonstrated extraordinary kindness and compassion. They informed the school's student body that no vote would be taken; rather, the title would be given to Eli Florence, a terminally ill sophomore who had been battling acute myelogenous leukemia for five years. When Eli showed up at halftime of the homecoming game – immediately after receiving a blood transfusion – he was stunned to learn he had been chosen homecoming king. Nine days after experiencing the special honor and the joy his classmates brought him in the midst of a terrible illness, Eli succumbed to the disease.
- **John Graf and Connor Sherwood:** John Graf, the wrestling coach at Morgan Middle School in Ellensburg, Wash., was asked by another school to arrange a match between one of his wrestlers and a student with cognitive and physical disabilities. The student had served as a team manager, but would now get the chance to wrestle in a real match. Because the student couldn't meet the sport's physical rigors, his opponent needed to be someone who could assure his safety and dignity. Graf asked Connor Sherwood, an eighth grader, to take the assignment – with the understanding that Connor would win the match. In the opening minutes, Connor took it slow, trading control with his opponent and allowing him to execute his moves. As the match progressed, Connor kept the score close. Toward the end, he kept an eye on the clock ensuring that the opponent would score a 9-8 victory. Connor, who had lost only twice all season, showed amazing maturity and selflessness, and forever changed another person's life.
- **The Edwardsville (Ill.) High School Wrestling Team:** Facing rival Granite City in the regional round of this year's Illinois state wrestling tournament, the Tigers emerged victorious by the slimmest of margins, winning by a half point. But after being informed by a friend that the unofficial scoring showed that Granite City – not Edwardsville – had won by a half point, Edwardsville Coach Jon Wagner added up the points again. He realized an error had been made and called the Granite City coaches. Both schools appealed to the Illinois High School Association to correct the mistake. The association originally denied the request. But the Tigers refused to let the incorrect result stand, and with the help of school district administrators, it was finally overturned. Although the decision effectively ended the team's season, the wrestlers put honesty and integrity above all else.

A current list of 2008 AT&T National Sportsmanship Awards honorees and their full bios can be found at www.nationalsportsmanshipawards.com.

The AT&T National Sportsmanship Awards is the signature event of the St. Louis Sports Commission's Sportsmanship Initiative. By recognizing outstanding individuals who set a high standard with their approach on and off the field, the organization hopes to set the tone for all parents, coaches, and fans to be "good sports" and to pass those values on to children in the community. It's the Sports Commission's goal to make St. Louis a model community for good sportsmanship and home to America's best sports.

Proceeds from the AT&T National Sportsmanship Awards benefit the Sports Commission's charitable Sports Foundation and Sportsmanship Initiative.

*The St. Louis Sports Commission is the privately funded nonprofit organization that benefits St. Louis through sports.
Its mission is to make the St. Louis region a better place to live, visit, work and play through sports.*

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Delivering the Best in Sports to America's Best Sports City