

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



**NEWS RELEASE**

**Colorado Coach, Cheerleader Selected  
for NFHS National High School Spirit of Sport Award**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 29, 2008) — **Tammy Dufford**, cheerleading coach at Evergreen (Colorado) High School, and her freshman cheerleader, **Megan Bomgaars**, have been selected as the 2008 national recipients of the “National High School Spirit of Sport Award” by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

The “National High School Spirit of Sport Award” was created by the NFHS to recognize those individuals who exemplify the ideals of the spirit of sport that represents the core mission of education-based athletics. Dufford and Bomgaars will be presented their awards July 6 in Washington, D.C. as a part of the 89<sup>th</sup> annual NFHS Summer Meeting.

Entering her first year as cheerleading coach at Evergreen last fall, Dufford opened the door for Bomgaars, an incoming freshman with Down syndrome, to try out for the cheerleading squad. Not only did Bomgaars try out, she made the team.

As the competitive part of the season approached, Bomgaars’ mother said she would understand if Dufford withheld Megan from tournament events because it could

affect the team's chances of winning. Dufford and the rest of her team said that Megan was a member of the team and that meant every game and every tournament, so she continued with the team all the way to the state championship.

After placing third at the Jefferson County league meet and winning the small varsity division in regional competition, Evergreen finished 12<sup>th</sup> at the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) State Spirit Championships in early December and received the award for good sportsmanship. Megan was lifted to the top of the final formation to a thunderous standing ovation from the 8,000 in attendance at Denver Coliseum. While other cheerleaders with Down syndrome have participated in cheerleading at local Colorado schools, CHSAA officials said this was the first occurrence at the tournament level.

"This is an exceptional story and one that embodies all that is good and right about high school sports," said Robert F. Kanaby, NFHS executive director. "Placing the individual above the team's pursuit of winning championships is a perfect example of the spirit of sport. Coach Dufford, Megan and the rest of the Evergreen cheerleading team are to be congratulated for their great act of sportsmanship."

In addition to the selection of Dufford and Bomgaars as the national winners, the National High School Spirit of Sport Award Selection Committee chose seven other individuals for section awards. Following are the 2008 National High School Spirit of Sport section winners:

**Section 1 – Connor David**, student-athlete, King Philip Regional High School, Wrentham, Massachusetts.

**Section 2 – Diane Dennis**, coach, Churchland High School, Portsmouth, Virginia.

**Section 3 – Leah Dorsett**, student-athlete, Crossville (Alabama) High School.

**Section 4 – Curt Bladt**, coach, Harlan (Iowa) Community School.

**Section 5 – Josh Jones**, student–athlete, Omaha (Nebraska) Central High School.

**Section 6 – Tammy Dufford**, coach, and **Megan Bomgaars**, student–athlete, Evergreen (Colorado) High School.

**Section 7 – Porter Ellett**, student–athlete, Wayne High School, Bicknell, Utah.

**Section 8 – Eric Ragan**, student–athlete, Lander (Wyoming) Valley High School.

Nominations were generated through NFHS member state associations and reviewed by the NFHS Spirit of Sport Award Selection Committee composed of state association staff members. While the national winners will be honored at the NFHS Summer Meeting, section award winners will be recognized within their respective states and will receive awards before the end of the current school year.

#### **About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)**

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education–based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 18,500 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

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