

**Colorado Sports Hall of Fame
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COLORADO SPORTS HALL OF FAME TO HONOR SEVEN

Tebow & Franklin Headline 2011 Athletes-of-the-Year

DENVER COLO. - World championship swimmer Missy Franklin joins Tim Tebow of the Denver Broncos as the 2011 Colorado Athletes-of-the-Year as the pair will be honored with five other competitors from the "Centennial" state at the 2012 Colorado Sports Hall of Fame April 10 banquet at the Denver Marriott City Center Hotel.

The Selection Committee of the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame picked Tebow as the Professional Athlete-of-the-Year after leading the Broncos to the NFL playoffs while Franklin's five medals at the 2011 World Championships in Shanghai propelled her in becoming Colorado's 2011 Amateur Athlete-of-the-Year recipient.

Other Athletes-of-the-Year selections were collegiate standouts Devon Beitzel (Northern Colorado) and Katelyn Steffan (Colorado State), high school honorees Connor Medbery (Loveland) and Annie Kunz (Wheat Ridge), and Disabled Athlete Recognition Award winner Mike Smisek.

The Athletes-of-the-Year selections will be honored at the April 10 banquet along with the newest Colorado Sports Hall of Fame inductees Marcelo Balboa, Frank Carbajal, Peter Forsberg, Glenn Gondrezick, Greg Myers and Will Nicholson, Jr. The Colorado Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2012 was selected this past October.

Tickets are \$175 each and Sponsor tables start at \$2,500. For additional ticket and table information, please telephone the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame (www.coloradosports.org, 720-258-3535). The Colorado Sports Hall of Fame & Museum is located at Gate 1 on the west side of Sport Authority Field at Mile High at 1701 Bryant Street in Denver.

The 2007 Heisman Trophy winner from Florida, Tebow led the Broncos to the 2011 AFC Western Division championship as the second-year quarterback guided Denver to its first playoff appearance since 2006. Competing in 14 regular-season games this season, Tebow passed for 1,729 yards and 12 touchdowns while rushing for 660 yards and six scores. To start the post-season, Tebow's 80-yard touchdown pass to Demaryius Thomas secured the Broncos a win on the first offensive play of overtime in Denver's 29-23 win over the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Tebow also ended 2011 as America's favorite active pro athlete as determined by a pool by ESPN that had the Denver Broncos quarterback ranked atop the list for the month of December. In the 18 years of the ESPN Sports Poll, only 11 different athletes - a list that includes Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods and LeBron James - have been No. 1 in the monthly polling.

As a 16-year old, Franklin captured five medals at the 2011 FINA World Championships, including three gold medals in the 200-meter backstroke, 4x100-meter medley relay and 4x200-meter freestyle relay. She also won the 100-meter freestyle and 100-meter backstroke and finished fourth in the 200-meter individual medley at the 2011 ConocoPhillips National Championships

A 2010-2011 USA Swimming Grand Prix Series champion, Franklin set the first world record of her career in the 200-meter backstroke (short course) at October's FINA Swimming World Cup by bettering the previous record of 2:00.18 held by Shiho Sakai, with a time of 2:00.03. Colorado's 2010 female high school athlete-of-the-year, Franklin became the first female to break an individual world record since the high-tech bodysuits were banned in January 2010.

Scheduled to graduate in 2013 from Regis Jesuit High School in Aurora, Franklin teamed with Natalie Coughlin, Rebecca Soni, and Dana Vollmer to break the previous American-owned world record in the 4x100-meter medley relay in a time of 3:45.56, bettering the previous record of 3:47.97. Swimming the freestyle leg at the 2011 Duel in the Pool event in December, Franklin had a split of 51.32 while swimming the freestyle leg.

Beitzel averaged a NCAA Division I school-record 21.5 points per game during the 2010-2011 season to rank 12th in the country in scoring to lead Northern Colorado to its first NCAA Tournament appearance in just its fourth year of NCAA Division I postseason eligibility. The 2011 Big Sky Conference most valuable player, Beitzel led the Bears in scoring in 26 of their 32 contests. As a senior as he scored 25 or more points 13 times, including putting in a game-high 25 against San Diego State in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

As a senior in 2011 from Centaurus High School in Lafayette, Colo., Beitzel joined former Bear Dennis Colson (1967) as the only two men's basketball players in school history to be named as a first team to Academic All-America. Currently playing professionally in Argentina, Beitzel finished as UNC's No. 3 all-time scorer with 1,568 points

A 6-4 senior left-side hitter from Dickinson, N.D., Steffan was the 2011 Mountain West Conference's player of the year after averaging a team-leading 3.59 kills a set for a CSU team that went 24-6 and swept the MW regular-season and conference tournament titles. Steffan, who played right-side hitter her first three seasons at CSU, also averaged 1.8 digs and 0.87 blocks a set and had 25 service aces.

Steffan joined fellow Ram player Megan Plourde in being named to the 2011 All-American team by the American Volleyball Coaches Association to become the first Colorado State University players named an AVCA All-American since 2007. Steffan's former Ram teammate Danielle Minch won the 2010 Colorado women's college athlete-of-the-year award.

Medberry ended his high school wrestling career at Loveland with a 163-2 record. After his second loss that relegated him to third place in the state tournament, Medberry never lost after that on the Colorado prep mats and went on to win 129 matches in a row. That string, the second-best in Colorado history, enabled him to win state championships at 215 in 2009 and 2010, and heavyweight in 2011. Those victories were produced with an average pin time of just over one minute.

Currently attending Wisconsin on wrestling scholarship, Medberry was also a standout on Loveland's football team where he earned all-state honors as a fullback by rushing for 1,969 yards during the 2010 season while also playing defensive end.

At the end of May last year, Kunz won four Class 4 titles by capturing a pair of first-places in field events (high and triple jumps) at the state championships before topping the podium in two track hurdle contests (100 and 300 meters) to score 40 points in the prep finals. On the same weekend, she also led Wheat Ridge to a semi-final victory in the state championships where the Farmers eventually finished second.

A standout soccer player this past fall at Texas A&M, Kunz ended her prep career with six total track and field championships, including records in the high jump and 300 hurdles. She also helped Wheat Ridge to successive state soccer titles in 2009 and 2010.

Smisek is a multi-sport athlete and a Sargent Shriver Global Messenger for Special Olympics Colorado. A resident of Castle Rock and 16-year SOCO athlete, Smisek earned one of the most prestigious honors given by the organization when he was introduced as the 2011 Male Athlete of the Year at the Annual SOCO Hall of Fame Breakfast of Champions.

Diagnosed with autism in October 1987, Smisek initially got involved with Special Olympics at the age of 12 when one of his Middle School physical education teachers signed him up for the regional Special Olympics Athletics competition. His first race was the 200-meter run - he has been drawn to sports ever since, excelling in many sports including bowling, golf and snow shoeing, and meanwhile earning several gold medals.

Since its inception in 1965, the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame had inducted 216 individuals prior to Tuesday's selection meeting for the Class of 2012. The first class of inductees featured Earl "Dutch" Clark, Jack Dempsey and the late Supreme Court justice Byron "Whizzer" White. Art Berglund, Jason Elam, the late Keli, McGregor, Bobby Unser, Larry Walker and Alfred Williams were inducted this past April as the Class of 2011.