



NUTMEG STATE GAMES

2007 TORCH RUN PRESENTED BY COMMERCE BANK

The Nutmeg State Games brought back an Olympic tradition, for the second consecutive year, by including a Torch Run as part of 2007 Opening Ceremonies, Sunday, July 29. This year brought a new presenting sponsor, Commerce Bank. Athletes ran with the torch for a designated distance before passing the torch to the next runner. The run went through several towns and brought about community support for all athletes participating in the Games.

"Commerce Bank was proud to partner with the Nutmeg State Games in support of its mission to celebrate Connecticut Youth through sport," said Mike LaBella, regional vice president for Connecticut. "We were thrilled to be a resource for a program that transforms and enriches the lives of the neighborhoods, communities and people who comprise the Commerce network."



Fred Petrossi and Charles Christy prepare to participate in the 2nd Torch Run starting at Commerce Bank in Norwalk.

The Torch Run, presented by Commerce Bank, began with a brief ceremony at Commerce Bank in Norwalk. The last runner arrived in Bridgeport at Kennedy Stadium, where the Nutmeg State Games Opening Ceremonies and Star 99.9 Fan Fest were held.

Torch runners included: Fred Petrossi, Assistant Vice President and Norwalk/Westport Manager of

Commerce Bank, led the relay; followed by Charles Christy from Shelton, also a Commerce Bank employee; Krista Lamoreaux from Avon; Nekane Mendizabal from Stratford; Joe Fitz Harris from Norwalk; Victoria Perez from Trumbull; Paul Couzelis from Norwalk; Jenny Ross from Stratford;



Torch Run participants pose for pictures at Commerce Bank

Andrea Williamson-Hughes from New Canaan who works at Save The Children in Westport; Marty Schiavone from Stratford who was instrumental in helping to organize the torch run course; Ed Kulhawik, the Wilton Police Chief; Dave Peck, the Fairfield Police Chief; followed by Beth Leetch, a Fairfield Police Officer. The last leg of the relay was run by Jessica Imbro, 2006 Nutmeg State Games Athlete of the Year.

The Fairfield County Sports Commission was, once again, a driving force behind the organization and support for the Torch Run, presented by Commerce Bank. "The Sports Commission is again proud to play a role in promoting all the terrific activities and competitions that the Nutmeg State Games bring to the area," said Tom Chiappetta, Fairfield County Sports Commission, Executive Director. "Helping to organize the revival of the torch run, which allows our residents to be an active part of the Games, meets our charge to be the county's advocate for a healthy, active lifestyle."

The 2008 Torch Run route will take place from the Bridgeport area to Danbury! Stay tuned for more information.



FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR Jessica Ann Sullivan ~ Track & Field

Every so often an athlete comes around that has true natural abilities, determination, respect, and is able to put it all together at a young age to achieve success. Jessica Ann Sullivan is one of those athletes, a multi-sport star, who puts family and academics before athletics.

Jessica was a top gymnast in the state (2004 – 2006) and elected captain of her team in 2006. Jessica was an All Conference (ECC) selection and medaled at the CIAC State Gymnastics Championships. In 2007, Jessica made a difficult decision and decided to participate in Indoor Track & Field rather than pursue gymnastics. Jessica's decision turned out to be the right one setting the Girl's CIAC State Indoor Record five times in the Pole Vault and won the Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) title, CIAC Class LL Title and the Connecticut Open Championship. As a pole vaulter, Jessica excelled under the tutelage of her coach, Russ VerSteeg, and her outstanding work ethic.

Jessica won the CIAC Class LL State Outdoor pole vault title in her sophomore (2005), junior (2006), and senior (2007) years, setting the then Meet Records of 10'10" in 2006 and then breaking it in 2007. During the 2007 Indoor and Outdoor Track & Field season, Jessica won both titles, setting Meet and State Records with a jump of 11'06".



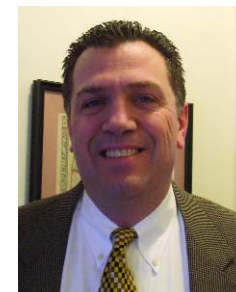
2007 Female Athlete of the Year Jessica Ann Sullivan

Jessica's coach, Russ VerSteeg, said he has "never coached an athlete who has been more serious, motivated and willing to work hard." Jessica considers family and academics her top priorities but has always found the time and energy to devote to athletics. Jessica graduated from Norwich Free Academy with Highest Honors and is currently attending Notre Dame and competing on the Track & Field Team.

Jessica turned down a number of scholarship opportunities at other schools in order to attend the University of Notre Dame. Academics have always been her number one priority in selecting a college. Jessica is a walk-on athlete on the Track & Field team at Notre Dame. In her first Indoor Meet Jessica vaulted 11'0" in December. Jessica received straight A's in her first semester and is loving the experience!

Coach of the Year Jim Welton - Basketball

Playing for Coach Welton means three central things: a focus on fundamentals, teamwork and individual skill development. Jim believes life lessons are as important as wins and losses. The focal point of his coaching philosophy is about "Team" and the team motto he instills in his players is "It Takes 10". Whether in a friendly scrimmage or in tournament play, all ten players play significant minutes each game.



2007 Coach of the Year Jim Welton

Jim has participated as a coach in the Nutmeg State Games for the past four years with each of his teams advancing to medal round play and bringing home gold, silver and bronze medals. As a coach and board member for the Wescon Fillies, a girl's AAU program out of Western Connecticut, Jim has been very successful, medaling at the CT State AAU Championship and qualifying for the AAU Nationals.

Jim has been employed by Novartis Pharmaceuticals for the past 22 years and is a graduate (BS & MBA) from UConn. Jim and his wife (team manager) Belinda have two daughters Nicole and Halli who both play on Jim's teams.

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Nutmeg State Games 2007 Award Winners

All across the nation in State Games from Maine to California, coaches, officials, coordinators and volunteers contribute to help amateur athletes of all ages and skill levels compete to bring home the gold. Every year, we feel it is essential to recognize those people who help the Nutmeg State Games achieve our goal of running 1st class events. It gives us great pleasure to announce the 2007 Nutmeg State Games Award Winners.

In 2007 the Connecticut Student Loan Foundation joined the Nutmeg State Games Family of sponsors. As part of their sponsorship they will be the official sponsor of the Athlete of the Year Award. The Athlete of the Year Award recognizes amateur athletes that have climbed to the top, excelled in their events, overcame great hardships and displayed tremendous sportsmanship.

The Connecticut Student Loan Foundation (CSLF) is a national, non-profit agency that administers, guarantees, and finances loans within the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) and alternative student loan programs. CSLF has more than 40 years of experience providing assistance to students and parents seeking to finance a higher education. CSLF promotes access to higher education by helping families plan for and pursue their postsecondary education and by assuring that low-cost funding options remain available to eligible students and parents. Learn more about CSLF at www.cslf.com.



Connecticut Student Loan Foundation

MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR George Hunkele ~ Roller Hockey

Sportsmanship, effort, dedication and respect are just a few of the many qualities George Hunkele possesses on and off the field. George has participated in athletics for as long as he can remember and his active schedule keeps his parents quite busy juggling baseball, ice hockey, lacrosse, roller hockey and soccer practices throughout

the year. Athletics have always played an important part in George's life but his friendships with teammates and the challenge to succeed are the driving force behind his desire to compete.

George has participated in the Nutmeg State Games Roller Hockey Tournament for the past five years, winning numerous medals, and also represented Connecticut at the 2005 State Games of America National Championships where he helped his team bring home the Gold Medal. Over the past two seasons, George has been named captain of his Ice Hockey team, the Mid Fairfield Blues, which made it to the quarterfinals of the USA Nationals. George was also selected to compete at the Quebec Pee Wee International Hockey Tournament (USA Ice Hockey's version of the Little League World Series) as a member of the Pee Wee New York Rangers. George was one of the offensive leaders at the tournament, was named co-captain, and his team was coached by former NY Ranger and Hall of Fame inductee Mark Messier. During this past summer, George attended the New England Developmental Hockey Camp representing Connecticut with some of the best players from all over New England.



2007 Male Athlete of the Year George Hunkele

George has always recognized the importance of the team before self or individual achievements. Throughout his time playing sports he has demonstrated the determination, hard work, and desire for improvement that have made him a coach's dream. George aspires for one more run at nationals before making the jump to high school athletics.