



Collegiate Sport Clubs

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Collegiate Sport Clubs Honors Its Teams and Student-Athletes

BOULDER – University of Colorado collegiate sport clubs honored their teams and student-athletes at their 10th Annual Awards Banquet at the University Memorial Center on Wednesday night.

The student athletes that were honored were senior **Steve Nester** (men's water polo and swimming and diving), senior **Laruen Fowler** (swimming and diving), senior **Justin Macauley** (men's soccer) and senior **Tasia Scott** (dance). Also **Tom Puzio**, the head coach for men's baseball, was awarded the Coach of the Year honor while men's soccer was named the Club of the Year.

The four student athlete awards were voted on by the students that make up the collegiate sport clubs council. The Club and Coach of the Year awards were decided by collegiate sport clubs co-directors **Patty McConnell** and **Kris Schoech**.

Men's soccer earned the Club of the Year award after the team won the school's first national championship in the 2010-11 academic year. The Buffs' national championship victory is the second in team history and the first since CU won it all in 2005. Colorado defeated the University of Missouri 3-1 in the championship game on Nov. 20, 2010 in Phoenix, Ariz., to cap off a 19-2 season.

The men's soccer program has grown consistently over the years as last season they added a third team and had nearly 100 percent participation in all of their practices by the 66 players in the program. The Buffs goal coming into the season was to win the national championship and after team defeated Colorado State 3-0 on Sept. 11, 2010 at Dicks Sporting Goods Park, the team really began to believe that they could win the title.

"I thought we made a lot of strides the last two years, but we definitely deserve the award," said **David Vaughan**, who will be entering his third season as the CU men's soccer head coach next fall. "It is a lot of e-mails, a lot of meetings and a lot of hours that were put in to this program. For me, it was never about the money, it was always about the love of the game and giving these kids one more opportunity to hang their hat on before they leave college."

Laruen Fowler was named the Female Athlete of the Year after her great performance at the swimming and diving championship meet. The senior from Colorado Springs, Colo., had a dominate outing at this year's East Coast Championships, picking up five individual medals, three of which were gold. Fowler also holds three individual and three relay team records.

During her freshman year in college, Fowler injured her hip and after having surgery the following summer, missed her entire sophomore season while recovering. When she returned to the water, Fowler was better than ever and excelled in the 200 yard backstroke where she broke her own school record at least three times, including at this year's championships. She will graduate in May with degrees in English and political science and worked in the collegiate sport clubs office this past semester as a student assistant. Fowler will begin graduate school next fall at the University of Northern Colorado.

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“I am very honored and surprised,” Fowler said. “It feels good and I’m glad that all of my training paid off. When I broke that record in the 200 yard backstroke, I didn’t think I was going that fast in the race, but when I looked up at the board, it was a great feeling. It was a great meet.”

Steve Nester earned the Male Athlete of the Year honor after he led two teams to nationals this past year. Nester, who will be graduating in May with a degree in finance, was both a member of the swimming and diving team and the men’s water polo team. With men’s water polo, Nester was named the rookie of the year in 2007 and has been named to the conference’s second team once and to the first team twice. For the last two years, he was the president of the men’s water polo team and helped the Buffs finish eighth in the country at nationals in November.

In the spring, Nester continued his dominance in the water, but this time with the swimming and diving team. During the East Coast Championships on Apr. 1-3, he set two individual records, including winning gold in the 200 yard freestyle in which he defeated Rhode Island’s Joe Sagginario by 22 hundredths of a second. Nester also added a silver and bronze medal to his collection at this year’s championships. Nester holds three team records and has 10 individual top five times in CU swimming history. He also led the swim and dive team to three championships at his time in Boulder. Nester is also the accounting manager for collegiate sport clubs.

“It was four years of hard work. There were a lot of weeks where I spent 20 hours in the pool,” Nester said. “It means a lot to be recognized. I owe a huge debt of gratification to the collegiate sport clubs program as a whole, especially to Patty McConnell and Kris Schoech. Patty has been extremely helpful since I was a sophomore and I couldn’t have done anything without her.”

Maybe no one worked harder for their team last fall then Justin Macauley did for the men’s soccer team. Macauley was awarded the Male Sportsman of the Year award for his leadership, commitment and dedication to the men’s soccer team. Macauley helped organize the first ever Rocky Mountain College Cup against Colorado State at Dick Sporting Goods Park, the home of the Colorado Rapids of Major League Soccer, and organized an event this past February with the Rapids and the MLS Cup Trophy at the University Memorial Center in a celebration of championship soccer in the state of Colorado. Along with being the men’s soccer team president, he was also the liaison to athletics and alumni for CU Student Government and will graduate in May with a degree in business administration.

“Sometimes you come across students who are beyond their time and Justin is one of those people,” said collegiate sport clubs co-director Kris Schoech. “He is one of the most mature guys I have met in the last year. Whatever Justin decides to do in life, he is going to be very successful. He did a great job with men’s soccer this year. He organized the first Rocky Mountain College Cup between CU and CSU, and now we are going to do it every year. Men’s soccer and myself were very fortunate to have somebody like Justin Macauley.”

The Female Sportsman of the Year Award went to Tasia Scott of the dance team. While most collegiate sport clubs have the luxury of a coach, the dance team is not one of them. Scott, the team president, was also the student-coach for the last two years and put her team needs in front of her own. Scott has helped the team participate at the national championships for the past two years and organized and managed several successful fundraisers that almost completely paid for the team’s trip to nationals. Some of the fundraiser she organized was car washes, bake sales and a youth dance clinic.

“Tasia is an outstanding student leader,” said Patty McConnell. “She took the dance team from ground zero after they had issues with their coach, and with her leadership, she helped turned the team around. She stepped up and became the student-coach and team president. Tasia did everything that a team president and coach did and she did with a smile on her face. She was a pleasure to work with and never got upset. She was a hard worker and very committed because she wanted the team to succeed.”

After having a student-coach in baseball for the past 12 years, Tom Puzio has given life back to the program after he was hired as the first non-student coach last fall. Puzio was pro-active in obtaining an indoor training facility for his team and helped refurbish the infield at Boulder's Platt Middle School so his team would have a place to practice close to campus. His organization and the work he did with his players is some of the reasons why Puzio was named the Coach of the Year.

"This is very unexpected but certainly an honor," Puzio said. "There have been so many great coaches with all of the different programs here and they are all deserving. Certainly my guys worked hard, I worked hard, but at the end of the day it really comes down to the love for the guys that you have playing for you. It is a lot of hours away. You almost get to the point to where you are spending more time with those guys than your own kids, but if you love it, your family tends to understand that. This is an award that kind of represents that and the makeup of my family and the makeup of our team. I am very honored to be a Buff right now."

Along with men's soccer and swimming and diving, triathlon also won a championship this year for CU collegiate sport clubs. Six teams are still in session with cycling, crew, equestrian, men's and women's lacrosse and men's ultimate all looking to bring home a national championship in the next month.

Club of the Year: Men's Soccer

Coach of the Year: Tom Puzio, Baseball

Male Athlete of the Year: Steve Nester, Men's Water Polo and Swimming and Diving

Female Athlete of the Year: Lauren Fowler, Swimming and Diving

Male Sportsperson of the Year: Justin Macauley, Men's Soccer

Female Sportsperson of the Year, Tasia Scott, Dance

---CU Collegiate Sport Clubs---