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## News Release

### Five Awards Handed Out at North Carolina Olympic Celebration

**Cary, N.C.** – At the North Carolina Olympic Celebration, held over the weekend from Friday, September 28 to Sunday, September 30, five prestigious awards were presented by the Triangle Sports Commission to deserving Olympic athletes and coaches.

The LeRoy Walker Outstanding North Carolina Male and Female Olympian Awards went to Cullen Jones, winner of one gold and two silver medals at the London 2012 Olympic Games, and Abby Johnston, 2012 Summer Games silver medalist, respectively.

Cullen Jones, former NC State University varsity swimmer and current Charlotte resident, was North Carolina's most decorated Olympian in the London Games. He won gold on the Men's 4x100 Medley Relay, silver on the Men's 4x100 Freestyle Relay, and an individual silver medal in the Men's 50 Freestyle. This was Jones' second LeRoy Walker Award, having captured the same trophy for his outstanding performance in the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. Jones second place finish in the 50 unofficially makes him the world's second fastest man on water! A versatile performer, Jones also gave the keynote address at the Olympic & Paralympic Athlete Reception & Banquet on Saturday evening, September 29.

Abby Johnston competes for the Duke Diving Team under Coach Drew Johansen who also served as Head Coach for the US Olympic Diving Team in London. Johnston captured the silver medal in the 10 meter Synchronized Diving event. Together with her diving partner, Johnston became the first American(s) ever to win an Olympic Synchronized Diving medal. Coach Johansen accepted the award on Johnston's behalf.

Coach Mike Krzyzewski was awarded the first-ever Al Buehler Coaching Excellence Award. Citing Coach K's unprecedented run of two consecutive Olympic Gold medals (Beijing and London) for the US Men's Basketball team, Coach Al Buehler, a coaching legend himself and the main subject of a recent film and book titled *The Timeless Wisdom of Al Buehler*, told the audience that Coach K represented the United States at the highest level, in the finest way possible, and made his country—and state—very proud!

The Kay Yow Courage Award, was presented by Nora Lynn Finch, Associate Commissioner of the Atlantic Coast Conference, and a long time associate and friend of Kay Yow. Finch talked of the numerous examples of Kay Yow's courage, particularly when it came to fighting the cancer that eventually claimed her life. Finch indicated that this year's award winner, Manteo Mitchell, Assistant Track & Field Coach at Western Carolina University, was especially deserving, considering he ran his leg of the Men's silver-medal-winning 4x400 Relay with a broken leg but refused to stop or give up as he did not want to let his teammates and country down.

The Hill Carrow Regional Sports Leadership Award marked the final award presentation of the weekend. The award was presented to Bridge 2 Sports, the Triangle region's Paralympic organization, and to Ashley Thomas, the organization's executive director. The award was presented by Hill Carrow, who cited Bridge 2 Sports numerous regional Paralympic sports activities, including the organization's work to build awareness and understanding of disabled athletes with NBA players, led by Jerry Stackhouse, competing in Wheelchair Basketball.

#### **About the Triangle Sports Commission**

The Triangle Sports Commission (TSC) is the sports commission for the Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill and Cary (Triangle) region. The TSC is one of only 10 U.S. Olympic Committee Community Olympic Partners in the country. The TSC was founded in 2001 and is a non-profit charitable organization focused on building the region's sports tourism industry and overall sports economy. The TSC's first major project was winning the bid to relocate USA Baseball's Headquarters and Training Center to the Triangle, including over \$13 million in commitments secured by the TSC resulting in the development of the new USAB National Training Complex in Cary. This year marks one of the busiest years in TSC history, highlighted by the hosting of the U.S. Olympic Trials in Table Tennis, the U.S. Masters Swimming High Performance Camp, and the North Carolina Olympic Celebration. For additional information on the Triangle Sports Commission, visit [www.trianglesportscommission.com](http://www.trianglesportscommission.com).