

FOUR INDIVIDUALS INDUCTED INTO ADAPTIVE SPORTS HALL OF FAME IN 2021

National Adaptive Sports Hall of Fame recognizes achievements in summer and winter adaptive sports in the Competitor and Contributor categories

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The National Adaptive Sports [Hall of Fame](#) Award recognizes outstanding individuals who have made significant contributions to summer and winter adaptive sports in two categories: Competitor and Contributor. The Hall of Fame was created to honor individuals who have had an influential role in the field of adaptive sports as well as athletes who have excelled in it.

COMPETITOR CATEGORY

The award in the Competitor category recognizes one individual (an athlete or coach) in summer sports as well as one individual in winter sports, who has been active in international competition. Race results, team participation, innovative coaching techniques, and event promotions are considered for this category. Competitive racers and coaches must be retired from active racing or coaching for a minimum of three years prior to nomination.

Ann Walters-Thompson, from Weatogue, CT, is the 2021 Hall of Fame inductee in the summer competitor category. As a member of the USA Ski Team, Walters-Thompson was in a skiing accident in 1985 that left her paralyzed. During rehabilitation, she was introduced to wheelchair sports and would enroll at the University of Illinois that fall. Walters-Thompson was an integral member of the Illinois Women's Wheelchair Basketball Team which won a number of national championships. She was also part of the USA Women's Basketball Team that competed in



Ann Walters-Thompson is a 2021 inductee into the National Adaptive Sports Hall of Fame

Sydney, Australia at the 2000 Paralympics. Walters-Thompson was a dual sport athlete, also excelling in wheelchair racing.

After she wrapped up her competitive career, Walters-Thompson turned to educating and coaching. She would become the director of the university's coached education program and served as the editor of the second edition of "How to Plan and Organized a Wheelchair Road Race" and wrote and presented curriculum for an annual wheelchair track and field workshop. She would then become a faculty member at Springfield College in Springfield Massachusetts.

The inductee on the winter competition side is Kevin Bramble Cape May Court House, New Jersey. Bramble began skiing at age 11 in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. In 1994, he became paralyzed in a snowboarding accident. Shortly thereafter, he taught himself to monoski and would join the Winter Park Disabled Ski Team. He would be named to the U.S. Disabled Ski Team in 1998 and saw a period of great success starting in 2001 when he won gold in downhill at the World Cup in Snowbasin, UT Bramble would win gold in downhill the following year at the 2002 Paralympics in Salt Lake City and repeat that performance at the 2006 Paralympics in Torino, Italy.

Not only is Bramble a two-time gold medal Paralympic downhill mono-skier, he was an early pioneer of freestyle and extreme mono-skiing, even being



Jill Gravink and Kevin Bramble are the 2021 winter sport inductees into the National Adaptive Sports Hall of Fame



Kelly Behlmann with Move United's Director of Competitions Susan Rossi

featured in Warren Miller's 2006 ski movie "Off the Grid". From his experience as a para-athlete, he has contributed and encouraged a better quality of life for many other para-athletes through his innovation and determination to make the best adaptive equipment including world class KBG mono-skis. Bramble is always working to make something better. He also now builds the Terra, an adaptive downhill mountain bike.

CONTRIBUTOR CATEGORY

Two awards are also presented in the Contributor category, one for summer sports and another for winter sports. This award recognizes an individual who has made a significant contribution to the field, including innovative techniques, specialized equipment, program development, education or public relations.

Kelly Behlmann, Saint Peters, MO, was named to the Adaptive Sports Hall of Fame in the summer sports contributor category. In the mid-90's, working in the St. Louis area as a physical therapist, Behlmann recognized the need to create sports and recreation opportunities for her patients. She founded the Disabled Athletes Sports Association and has been the driving force for the last 25 years. Not only did she develop programming in St. Charles, MO, she singlehandedly developed comprehensive sports programming in the St. Louis metro area and in the Columbia MO area. Behlmann has been the administrator, fundraiser, coach, recruiter and cheerleader for all of her athletes, staff, parents and community partners since the inception of DASA.

In 1997, she founded and administered the Gateway Games and created the DASA summer day sports camps for kids with disabilities in 2000. As a result of her success, DASA has had three Paralympic gold medalists in the sport of sled hockey, a Team USA Assistant Coach and an athlete in Wheelchair Rugby, and a 3-time Paralympic medalist in the sport of track. In 2011, Behlmann was presented with the U.S. Paralympics Leadership Award.

The winter awardee in the contributor category is Jill Gravink from Nottingham, NH. Gravink has a BS Degree in Recreational Therapy and a Masters in Recreation Administration. In 1990, she founded Northeast Passage and serves as its Executive Director. In 2000, after years of successful collaboration, Gravink oversaw the merger of Northeast Passage with UNH to provide service to community, research in the field, and become a living lab for students. She serves as an Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of New Hampshire.

In 1995, Gravink and NEP brought sled hockey to the east, and the program has contributed players to Team USA in every Paralympics since 1998. She also helped to establish a master's degree program in Adaptive Sports at UNH. Northeast Passage has grown from serving 23 people in its first year to 6,000 in 2020. The program now offers 9 adaptive recreational sports and 4 competitive team sports. Gravink received a commendation from the Governor of New Hampshire, receiving the Governor's Accessibility Award and has received two Citations of Meritorious Service to the profession from the American Therapeutic Recreation Association.

To learn more about the Adaptive Sports Hall of Fame, including a list of past award recipients, visit <https://www.moveunitedsport.org/sports/adaptive-sports-awards/>.

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