

Special Olympics Kansas

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Kansas

NEWS RELEASE

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Tristian Smith Selected as Most Inspirational Athlete At State Basketball /Cheerleading Tournament by Special Olympics Kansas

Mission, Kan.- Every year Special Olympics Kansas recognizes an athlete as the most inspirational at the annual State Basketball tournament. The award, named in honor of former athlete Gary Samuels, is presented to an athlete who exhibits teamwork, support and enthusiasm for their game. Harvey County Wildcat athlete, Tristian Smith, was chosen as the winner of this prestigious award at the recent tournament. Smith was chosen from over 1200 athletes at the competition

"Tristian is always encouraging others to do their best, both on and off the court. Should anyone feel discouraged, he is there to boost their spirits and attitude. He helps his coaches with a smile. Whether helping move water coolers to gathering balls after practice, he is happy to assist. He practices on his own and often asks others to join him to help develop their basketball skills," stated his Coach, Joey Schmidt.

Tristian has been an athlete with Harvey County for 7 years. His favorite sport is basketball. He also swims, plays soccer, does track and field and bowling with his Special Olympics team.

Gary Samuels was a member of the Lawrence Green Machine Special Olympics Team from 1974 until his death in March, 1989. While he participated in many sports. Basketball was always his favorite. He was best known for his "Rainbow" shot, a hook shot from half court, which he sank with amazing accuracy. Following his death from cancer, his family wanted to establish a memorial with SOKS in Gary's name. The Gary Samuels Most Inspirational Athlete Award was established at the State Basketball Tournament. The award is presented annually at the dance to an athlete who exhibits teamwork, support and enthusiasm for their game.

Energized by the pride and power of teamwork, Special Olympics Kansas provides individuals with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to be an athlete...and more...through acceptance, inclusion, physical fitness, health and nutrition programs and leadership development.

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