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Special Olympics Athletes Of The Year Announced

Irving, Texas – The Big 12 Conference has announced the 2017-18 Special Olympics Athletes of the Year. This year's honorees are Casey Hostetler of Haysville, Kansas and Harrison Miller from Clarksburg, West Virginia.

Each season, the Big 12, in conjunction with select Special Olympics affiliate offices, identifies a female and male athlete who exemplify the tenants of Special Olympics. The two recipients and members of their family have been invited to the Big 12 Football Championship Game on December 2 for an on-field presentation.

Hostetler has competed in Special Olympics for 16 years and lists her favorite sports as tennis and basketball. She also participates in bowling, skiing, swimming, track & field, basketball, soccer, softball, volleyball and equestrian. She was selected as a Team Kansas delegate to the 2018 USA Games in Seattle to compete in tennis.

Among Hostetler's collection of medals are a silver and bronze in tennis from the 2015 World Games in Los Angeles and two silver medals in show shoeing at the 2009 World Games in Idaho. She was named the Most Inspirational Athlete at the Heartland Winter Games in 2013 and Best All-Around Cowgirl at the Parsons Rodeo.

Hostetler experienced her first Polar Plunge in January of 2017. She and her friend, Detective Erin Wannow of the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office, plunged into 33-degree water. Hostetler works fulltime at Dillon's Grocery Store and spends time as a volunteer for two organizations and competes in rodeos. Her favorite team is the Kansas men's basketball team.

Miller is a nine-year participant in Special Olympics in the sports of football, basketball, bowling and softball. He earned a gold medal in bowling at the 2014 USA National Games and has won three state championships in football as well as two each in softball and basketball.

The Most Valuable Player of the 2017 State Basketball Championships was also the 2014 Athlete of the Year for Harrison County Special Olympics and the 2012 MVP of the Summer Games Softball Tournament after hitting a game-winning home run. Miller was the first athlete to record a safety in West Virginia Special Olympics football history. He is captain of his football and basketball teams.

Miller is the West Virginia Athlete Representative for the Mid Atlantic Athlete Input Council. He enjoys helping other athletes improve their skills during his spare time and also participates with local fundraising.

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