



**Scholar-Baller**<sup>®</sup>

Education Sport Entertainment

Bringing Education to Sport and Entertainment since 1995



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**NCAS and Scholar-Baller Announce National Academic Momentum Award  
Recipients:**

***63 Student-Athletes Recognized for Academic Improvement***

**Orlando, FL...January 29, 2013** – The Scholar Baller program, in conjunction with the National Consortium for Academics and Sports (NCAS), on January 29, 2013, announced the recipients of the Academic Momentum Award. Eighty-nine nominations were received from 30 different colleges and universities across the country. The nominations were divided into three teams based on the level of academic improvement and the impact of that academic momentum on each nominee and his or her peers. A total of 28 male and female award recipients from the NCAS schools were chosen for team one, 17 recipients were chosen for team two and 19 recipients for the third team.

The names, schools, majors, and sports of the First Team Academic Momentum Award recipients are:

**James Putney**, New England College, Lacrosse, Business Administration

**Tanner Collins**, UC San Diego, Cross Country, Biochemistry

**Cassie Rochel**, University of Wisconsin, Basketball, Gender and Women's Studies

**Lindsey Lamar**, University of South Florida, Football, Communication

**Cody Compton**, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Wrestling, Sociology

**Molly Thomas**, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Soccer, Child Youth and Family Studies

**Sarie Morrison**, Louisiana State University, Gymnastics, Sport Administration

**Adrian Bushell**, University of Louisville, Football, Administration of Justice

**David Najem**, Columbia University, Soccer, Political Science

**Jeremy Smith**, Oklahoma State University, Football, Education

**Greg Nwoko**, University of Arizona, Football, Science, Technology, Health and Society

**Randell Johnson**, Florida Atlantic University, Football, Interdisciplinary Studies: Arts and Humanities

**Christopher Colvin**, Arizona State University, Basketball, Sociology  
**Carlton Falconer**, Florida Atlantic University, Football, Criminal Justice  
**Emily Gniatczyk**, University of Illinois at Chicago, Swimming, Psychology  
**Victor Oladipo**, Indiana University, Basketball, Sport  
Communication/Broadcasting  
**Alex Zurn**, Gettysburg College, Basketball, Sociology  
**Tobias Palmer**, North Carolina State University, Football, Sport Management  
**Brandon Jones**, Rutgers University, Football, Labor & Employment Relations  
**Vanessa Petrini**, Rutgers University, Tennis, Communications  
**Shanay Portis**, University of Cincinnati, Track and Field, Criminal Justice  
**Megan Klement**, St. John's University, Soccer, School Psychology  
**Ray Turner**, Texas A&M University, Basketball, Agricultural Leadership and  
Development  
**Jeff Baca**, UCLA, Football, Political Science  
**Ty-Meer Brown**, University of Connecticut, Football, Sociology  
**Ian Silberman**, University of Florida, Football, Family Youth & Community  
Sciences  
**Michael Murphy**, Monmouth University, Football, Health Studies

Second Team Academic Momentum Award recipients are:

**Lola Arslanbekova**, University of Louisville, Volleyball, Communication  
**Natalie Nimmo**, University of Ole Miss, Softball, Journalism  
**Josh Greene**, CSU Northridge, Basketball, Recreation & Tourism Management  
**Caroline Kuczynski**, Arizona State University, Swimming, Interdisciplinary  
Studies  
**Danny Pulliam**, Northern Illinois University, Basketball, Family, Consumer  
and Nutrition Sciences  
**David Hinds**, Florida Atlantic University, Football, Criminal Justice  
**Shakeia Pinnick**, Arizona State University, Track and Field, Family and  
Human Development  
**Matthew Hurst**, St. John's University, Lacrosse, Advertising Communications  
**Daniel Shirey**, Villanova University, Football, Communications  
**Alexandra Lowe**, Villanova University, Softball, Communications  
**Alisha Filmore**, Southern Methodist University, Basketball, Psychology  
**Joshua Jenkins**, West Virginia University, Football, Multidisciplinary Studies  
**Stormy Nesbit**, West Virginia University, Track, Art and Graphic Design  
**Jonathan Mathis**, Texas A&M University, Football, Agricultural Leadership  
and Development  
**Kaitlyn Aldrich**, University of Connecticut, Lacrosse, Psychology  
**Kelly Newcomb**, University of South Carolina, Track and Field/Cross  
Country, Public Relations  
**Branden Todd**, Florida International University, Track and Field, Business  
Administration

Third Team Academic Momentum Award recipients are:

**John Dickson**, Virginia Tech, Wrestling, Business Information Technology

**Russ Smith**, University of Louisville, Basketball, Communication  
**Jessica Gehrke**, Florida International University, Track and Field, Sand Volleyball, Sports and Fitness  
**Josh Reese**, University of Central Florida, Football, Sport and Exercise Science  
**Harry Adams**, Auburn University, Track, Sociology  
**Andrew Incho**, Canisius College, Soccer, Communications  
**Erica Winston**, University of Central Florida, Track and Field, Interpersonal Organizational Communication  
**Cristina Sanchez- Quintanar Munoz-Quiros**, Texas A&M University, Tennis, International Studies  
**Sandra Jean – Roman**, Monmouth University, Track and Field, Anthropology  
**Sam Kernan- Schloss**, Brown University, Soccer, Community Health & Economics  
**Stephanie Thompson**, Brown University, Softball, Neuroscience  
**Ensley Ann Gammel**, University of Florida, Softball, Family, Youth, & Community Services  
**Camille Everett**, University of Central Florida, Varsity Rowing, Interdisciplinary Studies  
**Michael Wilder**, UC Irvine, Men’s Varsity Basketball, Psychology and Social Behavior  
**Mar Rodriguez**, UC Irvine, Varsity Women’s Soccer, Sociology  
**Kelly Meggs**, UC Irvine, Varsity Women’s Basketball, Psychology  
**Hannah Croghan**, UC Irvine, Women’s Water Polo, Public Health Policy  
**Ashley Rivera**, Texas A&M Kingsville, Golf, Environmental Engineer  
**Jake Rouser**, Idaho State University, Football, Business Management

This year’s nominations included stories of overcoming past academic failures; transferring schools in the middle of a season; leaving his or her hometown and still exemplifying leadership while inspiring peers and teammates to do the same; overcoming the adversity of being injured and channeling their energy into academics; being an international student who had to persevere through hardships both academically and culturally; and participating in local community service initiatives.

The NCAS is an ever-growing organization of colleges and universities that provides opportunities for current and former student-athletes to continue their pursuit of higher education, while working in the community with children to address social issues. Established in 1985, the overall mission of the NCAS is “to create a better society by focusing on educational attainment and using the power appeal of sport to positively affect social change.”

Established in 1995, the Scholar Baller movement evolved in response to concerns that the student-athlete’s athletics role increasingly superseded the student role. In order to address this issue, the founding members of Scholar Baller developed a

groundbreaking program to bridge the gap between education and sport utilizing student-athletes' passion for entertainment and athletics. As a result, the Scholar Baller program has produced unprecedented outcomes in student retention and academic achievement. Each award recipient will receive a recognition certificate; the second and first team will also receive a authentic Scholar Baller medal. All nominees who made the first team will also receive a ThinkMan/ThinkWoman trophy. All nominees are individually and collectively a testament to the "student" in "student-athlete." Their commitment to academics and athletics is truly an inspiration.