

Colorado Sports Hall of Fame  
Empower Field at Mile High  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**COLORADO SPORTS HALL OF FAME HONORS NBA & NHL MVPs (NIKOLA JOKIĆ AND NATHAN MacKINNON) AND OTHER 2024 ATHLETES OF THE YEAR, INCLUDING TRAVIS HUNTER**

**DENVER** — Following a year when Denver-based major pro sports teams produced Most Valuable Players for both the NBA and NHL — a rarity indeed — **Nikola Jokić** of the Denver Nuggets and **Nathan MacKinnon** of the Colorado Avalanche were named Pro Athletes of the Year by the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame and will be honored at the organization’s 60th annual Induction & Awards Banquet, set for April 9 at the Hilton Denver City Center (1701 California St.).

Following voting that concluded on Tuesday, the Selection Committee of the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame also picked Heisman Trophy winner **Travis Hunter** of the University of Colorado (football) and **Alisha Little** of CSU-Pueblo (basketball) College Athletes of the Year, and **Scottie Vines** of De Beque (track & field) and **Chloe Elarton** of Valor Christian (volleyball) High School Athletes of the Year.

The **Colorado Christian University men’s golf team**, winner of a 2024 NCAA Division II national championship, was named King of the Hill, while **Jeff Clark**, a competitor and leader at Special Olympics Colorado, will be the recipient of the Hall of Fame’s Athlete with Disabilities Award.

Jokić, MacKinnon, the other 2024 Athletes of the Year, the Kings of the Hill and Clark will be honored at the 2025 banquet along with the impending Colorado Sports Hall of Fame inductees: Mikaela Shiffrin, Troy Tulowitzki, Larry Brown, Simon Fletcher, Theodore “Bubbles” Anderson and Lisa Van Goor.

With Jokić named the NBA MVP for the third time, and MacKinnon earning the Hart Memorial Trophy, which goes to the NHL player deemed “most valuable to his team” — both following the 2023-24 season — they became just the second players competing on teams based in the same city to land MVP honors in the NBA and the NHL in the same year. Magic Johnson of the Lakers and Wayne Gretzky of the Kings (Los Angeles) were the first to manage the feat, in 1989.

In the 2023-24 campaign, **Nathan MacKinnon** racked up 140 points (51 goals, 89 assists, both career highs), becoming just the 12th player in NHL history to do so in a single regular season. He joined Joe Sakic (2001) and Peter Forsberg (2003) as Avs to have earned the Hart Trophy, for which MacKinnon was a finalist for the third time. MacKinnon, the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame Male Athlete of the Year in 2019, also won the 2024 Ted Lindsay Award, presented to the most outstanding player in the league by the NHL Players Association. Sakic earned that honor in

2001. MacKinnon's 140 points last season were a personal best by a whopping 29 points. He scored at least a point in 35 consecutive games to start the season. Now in his 12th NHL season, MacKinnon received 137 of the 194 first-place votes for the Hart Trophy.

Before 2021, the Nuggets never had a player voted the NBA Most Valuable Player. Now they have three (in one). **Nikola Jokić**, the center from Serbia who led the Nuggets to the first NBA title in franchise history in 2023, was named MVP for the third time in four years. Only eight other players have three league MVP honors to their credit: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (6), Bill Russell (5), Michael Jordan (5), Wilt Chamberlain (4), LeBron James (4), Magic Johnson (3), Larry Bird (3) and Moses Malone (3). Jokić placed in the top five in three of the major statistical categories: total points (fifth), total rebounds (third) and total assists (second). He racked up 25 triple-doubles and averaged 26.4 points, 12.4 rebounds and 9 assists in the regular season. Jokić has now been named an Athlete of the Year three times by the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame.

**Travis Hunter** is sometimes described as a "unicorn" by college football standards. The CU standout not only plays on both offense (wide receiver) and defense (cornerback) for the Buffs, but he rarely takes off plays — and he still performs at the highest level. And the college football world certainly took note in 2024 as Hunter became just the second player from a Colorado-based school to win the Heisman Trophy, joining former CU running back Rashaan Salaam (1994). In the 2024 season, Hunter played 1,557 snaps on offense, defense and special teams, culminating with CU's loss in the Alamo Bowl. He caught 96 passes for 1,258 yards and a program-record 15 receiving touchdowns. On defense, Hunter chalked up four interceptions and 11 passes broken up, in addition to forcing a fumble that proved pivotal in an overtime victory over Baylor. The Heisman Trophy came in the same year Hunter also won the AP, Walter Camp and The Sporting News national player of the year honors, Lott Impact Trophy (national defensive player of the year), the Paul Hornung Award (most versatile player) for the second straight year, the Chuck Bednarik Award (defensive player of the year) and the Fred Biletnikoff Award (top wide receiver). He was also named the Big 12 Conference Defensive Player of the Year, a first-team AP All-American at two positions (cornerback and all-purpose player) and a second-team selection at another (receiver).

**Alisha Little** of CSU-Pueblo led the women's NCAA Division II basketball rankings in double-doubles (24) and blocked shots per game (3.6) for the 2023-24 season. A graduate of Grandview High School in Aurora who transferred from the University of Northern Colorado, Little earned second-team All-America honors from D2CCA and honorable-mention status from the WBCA. She also landed the Defensive Player of the Year award from the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference. All told, her 2023-24 averages were 20.8 points, 11.9 rebounds and 3.6 blocks per game. She was the only Division II women's basketball player to finish with more than 600 points, 300 rebounds and 100 blocks last season. In the 2024 portion of this season, Little was averaging 22.9 points, 9.9 rebounds and 3.5 blocked shots, recording eight double-doubles in her first 11 games of the campaign. Little ranks second in Colorado women's basketball history in points, third in rebounds and first in blocks. Little's dad, Andra Davis, played one season for the Denver Broncos and 10 years overall in the NFL.

**Scottie Vines** becomes the first CSHOF High School Male Athlete of the Year from western Colorado since Grand Junction football player Doug Musgrave in 1988. Vines won two national titles in the high jump last year, both in June — at the Nike Outdoor Nationals and the USA Track & Field U20 Championships. Vines cleared 7-4 1/4 at the Texas Relays in late March, marking the best jump ever by a Colorado high school athlete. At that point, he was the No. 1-ranked high school high jumper in the nation. He went on to earn the gold medal at the World U20 Championships with a career-best height of 7-4 1/2. Vines won three Class 1A state high jump titles. As a senior, he was named Gatorade’s Colorado Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Vines now competes for the University of Arkansas. Vines’ dad, Scottie Sr., is a former wide receiver for the Detroit Lions.

**Chloe Elarton**, considered one of the top high school volleyball setters in the nation, helped Valor to a third consecutive 5A state title in 2024. That led to her earning a spot on the MaxPreps Junior All-America team and being named Gatorade’s Colorado Volleyball Player of the Year and the CHSAA 5A player of the year. Elarton — daughter of former decade-long major league pitcher Scott Elarton, himself a CSHOF high school athlete of the year (1994) — has committed to play volleyball at the University of Georgia in the fall. She racked up 917 assists and 315 digs as a senior and finished her high school career with 3,089 assists.

**Colorado Christian men’s golf** captured the first national team title in school history, regardless of sport. In addition, it marked the first time a Colorado-based college program — regardless of gender or the division level — has claimed a team championship in NCAA golf. The Cougars defeated North Georgia 3-2 in the title match to earn the NCAA Division II title in May. It was CCU’s fifth team victory of the 2023-24 season. To follow that up, Colorado Christian swept the team titles in all five of its fall tournaments to start the 2024-25 season.

**Jeff Clark** has been an athlete in Special Olympics Colorado for more than three decades, competing in numerous sports over the years, including flag football, swimming, tennis, basketball and track & field. A recent graduate of Athlete Leadership University (a collegiate-style program for athletes with intellectual and developmental disabilities), Clark focused on creating more opportunities for aging athletes in his capstone project. With Special Olympics Colorado considering adding pickleball as a sport, Clark wanted to get behind the effort. While pickleball is not an official SOC sport, it is being explored through different regional “Learn to Play” opportunities. Participation in Special Olympics Colorado helped Clark in ways beyond competing and leadership. He couldn’t afford prescription glasses, but he received a free pair thanks to an Opening Eyes Screening during a competition. “I don’t think I’d be where I am today without Special Olympics,” Clark said.

**Tickets for the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame Banquet** are \$250 each and sponsor tables start at \$3,000. For additional ticket and table information, please contact the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame ([www.coloradosports.org](http://www.coloradosports.org) or 720-258-3535).

The Colorado Sports Hall of Fame & Museum is located at Gate 1 on the west side of Empower Field at Mile High at 1701 Bryant Street in Denver.

Since its inception in 1965, the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame has inducted 286 individuals, not including the Class of 2025. The first class of inductees featured Earl “Dutch” Clark, Jack Dempsey and former Supreme Court Justice Byron “Whizzer” White.