



## Virginia Amateur Sports, INC

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#VAComGames

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Virginia Commonwealth Games Athlete wins National Athlete of the Year

Virginia Amateur Sports, Inc (VAS) organizers of the Virginia Commonwealth Games at Liberty University, annual athletes of the year from each state are then nominated for the National Congress of State Games (NCSG) Athlete of the Year award. In 2021, 30 State Games organizations awards Athletes of the year and submitted their nominations for the national award. Virginia was honored for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in the last 5 years to have one of the national winners.

Olivia Goodwin, 11, Youth Female Athlete of the Year. She was born with a congenital heart defect, she was born with an electrical problem and is currently on her third pacemaker. Many times she has been peaking in her swimming, only to need another heart surgery and end up out of the water for 6 months for recovery. Then, it takes her another 6 months to get back to her pre-op weight and performance, needless to say this frustrates her. She understands that her heart condition is her story and she owns it, but never uses it as an excuse. She continues to swim even though she understands that she physically doesn't have what it takes for now, the water is her happy place. She believes that one day, she will place in an event. Her heart and toughness is inspiring, she dreams big and has grit. Olivia swims for the pure pleasure of being in the water and her love of the sport. Swimming has given her discipline, organization, and time management skills - all key to being successful in life. It has also taught her sportsmanship, teamwork, and how to be humble. Her younger sisters are beginning to do well in swimming and Olivia cheers them on. She's not jealous, she doesn't get mad, nor does she blame her heart or ask why she ended up with a pacemaker. Olivia's triumphs are not on the awards podium, they are completing a 500M Free exactly a year after heart surgery, completing an 800M Free even though she knew should would finish in last place, they are looking at the scoreboard and seeing that she finished. Olivia embodies the spirit and drive of competition - always striving for excellence, no matter what obstacle may be in the way.

Olivia was recognized at the NCSG Annual Symposium and TEAMS Conference and Expo on Wednesday, September 29<sup>th</sup> in Atlantic City, New Jersey .

Previous winners from the VA Commonwealth Games include : 2020 – Adult Female – Ashlynn Moore – Track & Field – Roanoke, VA and 2017 – Youth Male – Daylin Toms – Wrestling – Cool Ridge, WV.

For Full Release from National Congress of State Games including all national winners, click [here](#)



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About the Virginia Commonwealth Games at Liberty University: Modeled after the Olympics, the Virginia Commonwealth Games welcomes athletes regardless of age or skill level. The Games embody the values of participation, sportsmanship and healthy living amongst residents of Virginia and surrounding eligible states. The rights holder for the event is **Virginia Amateur Sports** (VAS). VAS has been organizing the event for 32 years and it is truly a grassroots effort that relies on the dedication of thousands of volunteers and support from local sponsors and organizations across the Commonwealth. VAS is a member of the National Congress of State Games.

About the National Congress of State Games: The National Congress of State Games (NCSG) is a membership organization comprised of over 30 Summer State Games and 10 Winter State Games organizations and a member of the United States Olympic Committee's Multi Sports Organizational Council. The mission of the NCSG is to support State Games member organizations in the promotion of health, fitness and character building through Olympic – style competitions and physical activities.

The NCSG is also the rights holder of the State Games of America, an Olympic-style event featuring competition between State Games medal winners (gold, silver, bronze) from across the nation.

For more information on the Games, including images for download, visit: [www.CommonwealthGames.org/news](http://www.CommonwealthGames.org/news)

*Member of the National Congress of State Games—learn more at [www.stategames.org](http://www.stategames.org)*