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**MEIJER STATE GAMES OF MICHIGAN ANNOUNCES
2021 ATHLETES OF THE YEAR**

*2021 Volunteer of the Year presented
by Lake Michigan Credit Union Announced*

Grand Rapids, Mich., January 25, 2022 – Officials with the Meijer State Games of Michigan revealed the 2021 Athletes of the Year as well as the 2021 Volunteer of the Year presented by Lake Michigan Credit Union. The four categories for the Athlete of the Year award are adult male, adult female, youth male, and youth female. The following names are the award recipients.

2021 Meijer State Games of Michigan - Athletes of the Year
Bios are included below.

- Adult Female: Rachel Lee – Archery – Okemos, MI
- Adult Male: Kyle Stokes – Track & Field – Ewart, MI
- Youth Female: Ella Spooner – Girls Lacrosse – Holland, MI
- Youth Male: Joshua Luptak – Ice Hockey – Berkley, MI

Volunteer of the Year presented by Lake Michigan Credit Union

Mike Nutting of Livonia, MI was announced as the 2021 Volunteer of the Year presented by Lake Michigan Credit Union. Nutting has coached at the Meijer State Games of Michigan summer games hockey tournament for 6 seasons. He spent 4 years with the 19 & under girls' team winning 2 gold and 1 silver medal. He went on to coach 2 more years with the boys 15 & under winning 1 gold medal during that time.

Volunteer of the Year award winner Mike Nutting states, "The Meijer State Games of Michigan hockey tournament has been a very rewarding experience for me because it creates opportunities and exposure for kids that may not have had them previously. I have had kids recruited for colleges or travel teams after participating in this event."

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When asked what has contributed to his success, Nutting replied, “To me the key to making each year successful is building a team bond in a short period of time. We have done this with off ice events and communication. Many of my teams keep in touch years after the weekend event. The combination of creating opportunity and enhancing their love of hockey is always my goal.”

Nutting grew up playing hockey in Livonia and finished his youth hockey career as captain at Livonia Franklin High School in 1992. He continues to play in adult leagues today. Nutting started coaching right out of high school and became a USA hockey level 4 coach in 2012. Having coached at all levels over the years - from learn to play - to high school with both boys and girls. Nutting currently coaches at Livonia Franklin High School.

2021 Meijer State Games of Michigan - Athletes of the Year - Bios

Rachel Lee, 18, Okemos, MI - The Okemos, Michigan native has been a consistent medalist at the Meijer State Games of Michigan, most recently placing second at the Indoor Archery competition for the Meijer State Games of Michigan and second in the Outdoor Archery competition. Lee was able to join the Junior Olympic Archery Development Program at the Demmer Center on Michigan State University’s campus, which allowed her to attain her Level 1 Certification through USA Archery. Lee has also been awarded the National Congress of State Games Female Athlete of the Year Award for 2021. She is consistently helping and cheering on her teammates and has the competitiveness to win but the compassion to support others. In high school, she had a 4.0 GPA and is currently attending Columbia University and competing on their Women’s Archery team.

Kyle Stokes, 20, Ewart, MI – Stokes graduated from Ewart High School in 2019. In high school, he placed at the MHSAA State Finals six times and was regional and conference champion multiple times. Most recently in the 2021 Meijer State Games of Michigan track and field competition, he was able to win the gold medal in the 100-meter dash and a bronze medal in the long jump. This competition also happened to be his first State Games meet. Outside of his own athletic achievements, Stokes is most proud of being a track and field coach at Ewart High School and helping the younger generation of athletes succeed on and off the track.

Ella Spooner, 17, Holland, MI – Spooner is the model student-athlete. She takes pride in both her athletic and academic achievements, earning a 4.1579 GPA going into her senior year at West Ottawa High School. On the field, Spooner had started on the West Ottawa Varsity Girls Lacrosse team since her freshman year. In her sophomore and junior years, she was named captain of the team as well. In addition to high school lacrosse, she also plays varsity basketball as well.



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Ella Spooner, 17, Holland, MI (Continued) - Spooner has made the decision to continue her educational and lacrosse career at Kalamazoo College. She also will be coaching at West Side Lax and the West Ottawa girl's middle school team.

Joshua Luptak, 11, Berkley, MI – Luptak was nominated by both a teammate's parent and by the Meijer State Games of Michigan hockey coordinator proving he had a dominant and impressive performance that caught everyone's attention. At the 2021 Meijer State Games summer hockey tournament, Josh led the team to a gold medal in the 11 & under division. He had five straight shutouts and allowed zero goals the entire tournament. He credits his teammates strong defense resulting in no goals against during the State Games. Luptak takes pride in working hard and doing what he can to improve his skills to help his team. When he is not on the ice, Luptak is a devoted big brother, baseball player, and member of the fifth-grade class at Rogers Elementary School in Berkley, Michigan.

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About the Meijer State Games of Michigan: The Meijer State Games of Michigan hosts Olympic-style, multi-sport events that welcome athletes regardless of age or ability level. The Games embody the values of participation, sportsmanship, and healthy living among the residents of Michigan. Since 2010, Meijer State Games of Michigan has hosted over 90,000+ athletes. The Meijer State Games of Michigan has also contributed over \$35 million in estimated economic impact to cities throughout Michigan.